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Palm Sunday

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ANNEX





# PALM SUNDAY



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# PALM SUNDAY

BY ROMAIN ROLLAND

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH

BY EUGENE LOHRKE



NEW YORK

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## PREFACE

*Palm Sunday* is the prologue to my dramas of the Revolution. As a companion piece and epilogue, still unpublished, the *Leonides*, which closes the epoch, belongs with it. Across a space of twenty-three disastrous years in which a world was destroyed and a world created from the ruin, the drama of the *Leonides* is linked to that of *Palm Sunday*: and two of its characters, the Count and Mathieu Regnault, confront each other again. It is my idea that the two plays should, later, form a single spectacle. But each in itself is a dramatic whole.

If the Revolutionary spirit, in this prologue, seems to sink into the background for fifteen years before coming to life again — (the action takes place in 1774) — it is for a number of reasons which I shall explain.

The first is that I wished to place the great tragedy which plowed Europe over and sowed it again under the inspiration of its fantastic prophet. It belongs to him. Not that he created it. No man creates

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anything — not even his thoughts — much less the dominant ideas which lay hold on the masses and knead the dough of humanity with a rod of steel. The genius does not create, he discovers forms wrought into the heart of the existing age, just as the chisel of the sculptor frees the living statue from the cold marble. He discovers them in himself. He discovers them around him.

The genius of Jean-Jacques, as everyone knows, inspired the Revolution, and I have no need to demonstrate that here. But what is less widely known is that thirty years before he had foreseen it, with his inspired eyes. Its muttered warnings are heard as far back as 1761 in Book XI of the *Confessions*. And the more that his delirium sank into his spirit, the more clearly this visionary, lost in his own wounded ego, sensitive, sickly, the center of his universe, penetrated to the horizon of things around him. The perpetual suspicion in which he lived that the world was conspiring against him, hardened the glance of his eye; it went far; it pierced to the bottom. It penetrated the veil of a mannered existence, of tolerant irony, of

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politeness and good taste. It visioned the monsters that lurked beneath. And those things which the keenly malicious spirit of the social order could not see, which it hid its eyes from — he saw with his dim, inspired eyes — the hatred that was piling up, the mutual contempt, the bitter intolerance parading under the name of philosophy, the appetite for tyranny that passed as liberty, a “generation of tyrants,” rising, and the wave rising behind them, the persistent and obstinate intrigues on the part of men who hated each other, united by a common hate, the cruel civil strife that was preparing, and Fate whirling the laughing generation toward destruction, the God of strife and vengeance — the Revolution.<sup>1</sup>

Even more tragic do these first fore-shadowings of the future madness become — just as in *Macbeth* in the smoking cauldrons —

<sup>1</sup> See note 2 at the end of the volume.

The author is careful to confine the spirit of the Revolution to this negation. But the negation itself may have its creative value. It played its part in the periodic renewing of the world.

As the *Upanishads* state, the definition of *Brahman* is a negation: *Neti* (*Pas Cecil*). That is what one sees here, looking through the eyes of Rousseau.

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when we consider that at the date in question (Louis XV was not yet dead) the doomed generation had still preserved its characteristic traits, its good taste in vice as in virtue. In the course of the reign that followed, society lost its bloom, and the bleatings at the Trianon announced the slaughter:

*“Back to the fold, white sheep  
The black-browed storm is coming.  
Behold the lightning gleaming! . . .”*

The charming little flock can never escape again! . . .

The nobility of Louis XV still numbered several representatives of the high type, of those from whom rulers are made. I have often regretted—for the battle would have been magnificent—that they were never matched, man to man, against members of the Convention. They were of the same heroic cast. Their natures were equally unyielding, though they were more masterful in manner. Between their attitude and that of their sons, one sees the contrast as of a Charles Stuart on the scaffold, still king with his head on the block, and the fat, bewildered locksmith who wrestled with

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his executioners and whose bellows were smothered in blood while the drums of Santerre rolled.

Of all that vanished race who possessed the great art of living and dying, the Prince of *Palm Sunday*, stands out supreme, dominating Fate with his irresistible smile.

Although I have slightly altered his name, I have not tried to veil the origin of the portrait: Louis-François of Bourbon, Prince of Conty, the cousin of Louis XV, the great-grandson of the brother of the great Condé; and of all the royal family the best fitted to rule. A more kingly figure than the real King. A large face, long and full, large, intelligent eyes, the mouth well formed and sensitive: a more substantial Louis XV, more like Louis XIV. In spirit, *proud, affable, energetic and philosophic in turn, a good deal like M. de Vendôme and the great Condé.* (The Prince de Ligne gives us the picture.) Intellectually gifted and generally capable.

Famed as a Lieutenant General for his conduct of the Italian war which assured France the province of Nice, and in the Flanders campaign where he rivaled Mar-



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shal Saxe who he was accused later of having killed in a duel. Minister without portfolio, who for ten years directed the secret correspondence of the King. Grand Prior of France of the Order of Malta. "*The only one of the princes of the blood who had scientific and literary tastes and who could speak in public. . . .*"

And that array of talents, those claims to glory brought to nothing; that energy unexpended; that brilliant personality shrouded in oblivion by force of circumstance and of his character.

The sole member of the court who refused to abase himself before the King's favorites . . . La Poisson (Pompadour). La Becu (Du Barry) never pardoned him. Shut off from affairs, he resolutely took the side of the Parliaments against the King in the crisis of 1770 which divided the kingdom. At the head of sixteen dukes and peers, he protested publicly "*for the essential rights of the whole nation — our own (he added proudly), those of our posterity — and for the maintenance of such laws as would assure them.*" Exiled at four leagues from the court, he saw the coalition of princes gradually dissolving, his

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own son a traitor, the whole movement melting away. He alone remained faithful to the end. The new reign preserved toward him the ill-will of the old. The first prince of the blood remained isolated from his peers, like an island, but surrounded, as by an ocean, with an immense popularity. (When he dies, what is there left? . . .) This independent prince, who made himself champion of the nation against the crown, was in reality a democrat. It was because he identified the monarchy with the nation that he would not let it sink; he sought to defend it against itself by establishing it on the Constitution. He bound the future to the past, and if the Revolution could have been averted, it must have been through a king such as he.

But even in exile, the Prince bore with him too much ironic contempt to try and dispute with his enemies the power which he knew belonged to him by right and which they had snatched away from him. "Gnaw the bone! . . . Dogs, I leave it to you. . . ."

Reduced to idleness, that great force of character found pleasure in voluptuous dis-

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solution — nevertheless he used his position nobly to protect things of the spirit. At the Temple, where he lived like a king, in that vast enclosure of church, convent, dungeon, princely hotel and artisans' houses, that inviolable refuge which had its own courts of justice, its police and its laws — he held his "Mondays" in the salon of the *Quatre Glaces* in the palace built by Mansard and Oppenord. Little Mozart played at his "*Thé à l'anglaise*." He pensioned Diderot. He collaborated, they say, with Beaumarchais. His chaplain was the Abbé Prevost. He admired Rousseau, acting, with the Luxembourgs, as his main protection; having saved him from Parliamentary action, he screened him from the arrest which threatened. In spite of all his follies he never ceased showing him an affectionate favor and a noble courtesy which nothing could tire out.

Without faith, he showed the same independence toward God as toward the King; and at the hour of death he refused the sacraments, the first of the Princes of the Blood to break the alliance of the throne and Heaven!

Thus he departed this life without hope

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or fear, without desires or regrets, smiling and at peace.<sup>1</sup>

I have used few of the characteristics of his legitimate son, the Count de la Marche, for the figure of the Count in *Palm Sunday*. The original lacked nobility. But, historically, he was pitted against his father as I have represented him. He remained in the King's party against that of the Princes and Parliaments. Conty disinherited him, and was not reconciled to him until the last.

As to the Maréchale, I crave pardon of the deft and charming spirit who immortalized the names of Boufflers and Luxembourg.<sup>2</sup> . . . Boufflers, "*the mother of Love*."<sup>3</sup> . . . Luxembourg the indulgent confidante of the sulky Jean-Jacques, the gentle audience for the *Nouvelle Héloïse*, "*La chatte rose*," with her clever intellectual claws, the arbiter of good taste, queen of the salons, queen in

<sup>1</sup> He died in 1776, two years after the date of the action of *Palm Sunday*.

<sup>2</sup> The Maréchale de Luxembourg, whose personality is dear to readers of the *Confessions*, was first married to the Duke of Boufflers.

<sup>3</sup> When Boufflers appeared at court  
One beheld the mother of love,  
Everyone hastened to please her,  
And each one pleased in his turn.

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beauty and intelligence, sovereign of fashion, of manners and taste. If I have permitted myself to borrow her smiling beauty for the Hebe of *Palm Sunday*, I protest that I have not sought to draw her portrait. I leave untouched the bloom of her memory, for I treasure it; and one does not yield, least of all to the public of the *Arenas*, those things with which one is in love. Peace to her lovely soul. . . !

. . . . .

The scene might be the Château de l'Isle-Adam, on the Oise, cradle of the Conty family. The façade shows the proud device of the Prince whose memory I have recalled, surrounding a sculptured oak, rising to the second floor:

*“Exagitat frondes immoto  
stipite ventus.”*

However, it was not at l'Isle-Adamâ, but at another of his châteaux, at Trie, near Gisors, that Conty, in 1768, received his uncomfortable guest, the shy Rousseau. But at the date of my play, the man, preyed upon by the Furies, had already broken with the Prince as with the Luxembourgs, the most



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faithful of his friends. I recall to the reader that the action of *Palm Sunday*, chronologically, is interpolated equally distant from the first dialogues of *Rousseau Judge of Jean-Jacques* (1772) and the delirious day when that tormented spirit went to leave the manuscript of his apology on the great altar of Notre Dame (1776). His madness had already developed, was at mid-course in the ascendant curve — four years before his death.

As to the title of the drama, it recalls not only the *Madonna* of the periwinkles, the first meeting with Madame de Warens. *Paques Fleuries* is Palm Sunday. And the Sunday that followed might be called: *The Easter of Blood*.

ROMAIN ROLLAND

January 29, 1926



## PALM SUNDAY



## PERSONS OF THE PLAY

THE PRINCE, LOUIS ARMAND DE BOURBON COURTENAY,  
58 years old.

THE MARÉCHALE SEPTIMANIE DE MONTLOUIS, 50 years old.

THE COUNT OF AVALLON, FRANÇOIS-TIMOLÉON, Son of the  
Prince, 35 to 38 years old.

THE CHEVALIER OF TRIE, JEAN-AMÉDÉE, Illegitimate Son  
of the Prince and the Maréchale, 20 years old.

THE COUNTESS DÉLIE, Wife of the Count of Avallon, 30 years  
old.

THE LITTLE VISCOUNT RENÉ, Son of the Count, 10 years old.

JEAN-JACQUES ROUSSEAU, 62 years old.

MASTER POPELIN, Notary, 63 years old.

MATHIEU REGNAULT, Advocate, Nephew of Popelin (he is  
the same age as the Count), 35 to 38 years old.

ROSE HUCHET, called *Huchette*, Gardener's Girl, 17 to 18  
years old.

GUÉRIN, Gamekeeper, 35 years old.

GAUDÉ, Officer to the Count.

THIERRY, Appraiser.

The Chaplain, the Treasurer of the Prince, and Master  
Momus, supernumeraries.

Valets and Gardeners, Peasant Girls, Musicians, Singers and  
Dancers.

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The scene takes place in 1774, the Saturday before Palm  
Sunday at the Château of Courtenay.

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An esplanade of the Louis XV garden, affording a view of  
lawns and fountains. In the distance, the horizon is enclosed  
by low hills and forests.

From the esplanade, which is semicircular, formed like a  
horseshoe, flanked by yew trees on both sides, an avenue of  
old trees, partly cut down, leads downward. The left branch



of the horseshoe gives on a stairway, which leads toward the grove. A balustrade of marble, ornamented with vases, surrounds the esplanade except in the center where there is a wide opening for the grand stairway, leading down into the invisible gardens. The opening is flanked by marble groups.

To the left, a colonnade of rose-colored marble forms the peristyle to a pavilion, in the manner of Trianon. Here the Prince comes with his suite to enjoy the view and take his tea. A harpsichord and some other instruments; viols, hautboys and pipes are disposed in a sheltered angle of the colonnade. The pavilion is built in a single story, and from it projects a little terrace from which the Count, at the close of the drama, dominates the entire scene.

## SCENE I

(*As the curtain rises, some valets [dressed in light, chamois-colored liveries] preparing the Thé à l'anglaise, and the gardeners who have been decorating the esplanade with flowers, are busily engaged trying to keep the hangings of the colonnade from blowing away. A squall of wind breaks through and the curtains fly.*)

— A squall!

— Champagne, grab those cords! The curtains will blow away . . .

— The sun was out a minute ago. And now . . . Phew! That cuts. . . . Hail! . . .

— Just a Spring shower:

“*Gentle April,*

*When she's angry, the worse for all. . . .*”

— And thunder with it! . . . The old man up there must be mad!

— Like the one below.

— Who?

— The rotten old King, of course. Our Louis, he doesn't even know what he wants

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any more. He just doesn't care. He lets that mistress of his do what she wants with him. She's going to lead the Princes and the Parliament a dance.

— Shut up! That's none of our affair.

— Who knows? Perhaps it will be some day. The Princes, the Parliament, the mistress and the great ones, they are like a gang of carpenters fighting on a roof. One day they'll all roll off down the gutter.

— Hold your tongue! Look who's coming.

— The Count and the Chevalier. . . . Just as I was saying . . . which of those two will throw the other off? . . .

*(They withdraw, bowing respectfully to the Count as he approaches from the gardens by the stairway to the left, with Gaudé. The Count wears a coat laced with silver and a blue bandolier.)*

SCENE II  
The Count; Gaudé

GAUDÉ

Monseigneur, shall we get under cover?

THE COUNT

It won't last long. There, the sun is out again.

GAUDÉ

But that thunder. The wind is blowing a gale. We'd be out of it in the angle behind those columns.

THE COUNT

*Exagitat frondes immoto stipite ventus. . . .*  
"The wind shakes the leaves but cannot move the trunk." Don't you know the motto of my house?

GAUDÉ

I see the Chevalier coming. Don't you want to come in?

THE COUNT

No, on the contrary; I'll stay. I wouldn't do him the honor of appearing to avoid him.  
(*The Chevalier, young, animated, enters from the right.*)

### SCENE III

The Count; the Chevalier; Gaudé (*who stays  
a little to one side*)

THE CHEVALIER

Ah! My brother; welcome! Charming to  
meet you!

THE COUNT

(*Ironically*)

And for me, no less, sir, even if I must be  
welcomed to my own home by you.

THE CHEVALIER

Not your home, and not my home, but  
the Prince's home.

THE COUNT

My father.

THE CHEVALIER

Mine also, I believe.

THE COUNT

I should be glad to believe it. But you  
know the proverb . . . (Where did I

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read it, Gaudé) . . . "In my father's house are several chambers . . ." — But all are not equally good.

THE CHEVALIER

*(Nettled)*

You like to remind me that we did not come in by the same gate. But whatever the door, I am here anyway. And who knows? If one of us has to leave some day. . . .

THE COUNT

Well?

THE CHEVALIER

Let it go at that. When I am caressed, I respond. And out of solicitude for you, I ought to warn you.

THE COUNT

When one makes a threat it should be stated clearly, sir.

THE CHEVALIER

You misunderstand me, brother. The threat does not come from me. Merely the warning.



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### THE COUNT

I see that you've come here with a secret that is burning you. Don't let it make you uneasy.

### THE CHEVALIER

Speaking for myself, I don't enjoy in the least bringing you news that will displease you. But I consider myself obliged to warn you of the risk that you are running in opposing the wishes of my father.

### THE COUNT

It would be more appropriate to save your warning for the Prince and let him know what bad form it is to oppose the wishes of the King.

### THE CHEVALIER

The wishes of the King are those of his mistress. The scepter wasn't made to scratch the back of a gossip.

### THE COUNT

There are worse uses.

### THE CHEVALIER

*(Laughing)*

Well, the back is fat enough. I don't envy it the office. But everything in its proper

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place; and it isn't a scepter I'm bidding for anyway.

### THE COUNT

You aren't on the steps of the throne yet. Leave to the Princes of the Blood (indicating himself) the defense of all that pertains to its glory.

### THE CHEVALIER

You like to remind me of my illegitimacy. I have never forgotten it; but you will see, sooner or later, that it is one of those mistakes that can be corrected. However, let that pass. . . . it's not the time to speak of such things now . . . the whole question is not what I think, but what my father wishes. And you can hardly deny the first Prince of the Blood the right to express himself on affairs of state.

### THE COUNT

The Prince is supporting rebels. He is making himself the champion of the seditious Parliaments against the King.

### THE CHEVALIER

The Prince is defending our rights.

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THE COUNT

*(Laughs insolently)*

Ha! Ha!

THE CHEVALIER

*(Ruffled)*

Be so good as to tell me, sir, what you find amusing in my words.

THE COUNT

Count me out of them. *(Laughs again.)*  
Your rights!

THE CHEVALIER

Do you pretend to deny them?

THE COUNT

I can deny nothing, sir, of things I know nothing about.

THE CHEVALIER

*(Irritated)*

The Prince is defending the rights of the sovereign nation and laws against the King. We and the Parliament, we are its guardians.

THE COUNT

Fools are always well guarded! — There are no laws, sir, except of the King. The

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nation is his property. The Parliament only exists because it pleases him. And we, Princes of the Blood, we exist because he does. In defending the King, I defend myself and my own blood. I maintain my position.

THE CHEVALIER

You misunderstand it.

THE COUNT

And you think you could set me right!

THE CHEVALIER

No more than you could set the Prince right.

THE COUNT

I don't recognize your right to speak for him.

THE CHEVALIER

He shall speak for himself. And in my generosity I would spare you that. As to the right which you pretend to deny me, sir, that does not depend on you; and tomorrow it will be announced publicly.

THE COUNT

Which means?

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### THE CHEVALIER

I ought to keep it a secret. But since you force me I may as well give myself the pleasure of telling you that tomorrow the Prince will recognize me publicly, as his son. I expect you to be beside yourself with the good news. No one knows it yet. My affection for you demanded that I tell you first. . . . Let us embrace!

### THE COUNT

There's no hurry. Let's wait until tomorrow.

### THE CHEVALIER

I am in no hurry. I leave you, brother, for gentler embraces.

*(He exits, laughing, right. During the dialogue, the weather has cleared, and the sun reappears between misty showers.)*

## SCENE IV

The Count; Gaudé

GAUDÉ

The young cock likes to crow. Is it a bluff?

THE COUNT

He's been intriguing for a long time to get that precious bit. But I hoped that the Prince had enough sense of dignity to make him wait for it to the end, when his spirit was about ready for its flight. The blow is sudden. If it is true, I swear it takes me quite unaware. What do you advise, Gaudé?

GAUDÉ

*(Pointing to the rainbow which is spreading through the brightening showers.)*

The rainbow . . . Sir, make peace!

THE COUNT

When I have crushed him. I never make peace except when I am the conqueror.

GAUDÉ

Have a care! It may or may not be a coincidence that the sudden elevation of the

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Chevalier comes at a time when you and your father are quarreling. Anything is better than a quarrel that goes too far. (*The Count shrugs.*) If you take my advice you won't provoke the Prince. Rather flatter his pride. He can disinherit you.

THE COUNT

He wouldn't dare.

GAUDÉ

Who knows? It wouldn't pay to defy the most intractable man in France — after yourself.

THE COUNT

No, I tell you. The scandal will come home to roost. By God . . . that would be pleasant. I'd love to see it . . . I wouldn't give an inch to him. It isn't only a question of pride. It's a question of the honor and duty of my race. . . . Since I was an infant, Gaudé, I have watched the extravagances of the Prince and the court for which he sets an example. I have watched that doomed generation of strong spirits and weak spirits, forgetting their rank; I have seen the mad carelessness which makes them, through



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sheer bravado, throw their fortunes and the good faith of their subjects to the wind. It sets them all to criticizing the King, the church, traditions, to playing with impiety, revolt, irony, to caressing Voltaire and his ruffians, that philosophic crowd, who eat like worms at the very foundations of the strong social order built by the valor and intelligence of our fathers. The King deserves no better. Don't think I deceive myself. He enjoys seeing the ancient house of France, confided in him, crumbling to pieces. We must save it in spite of him, no matter what happens, because he is the King. But while I try to rally to the throne the last vestiges of loyalty, my father takes pleasure in destroying it. He plays the friend of the people; he puts himself at the head of rebels against his kinsman and his master. And he wants to force me to follow him. Never! I am wasting myself, watching the years of my full vigor pass, and still playing second fiddle, useless, fettered, when I burn for action, burn to take the rising rebellion by the throat. When will he leave me my estate? When can I myself rule as head of my own house? Ah, when, indeed, will he die? . . . They have lived and de-

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stroyed enough. What kind of a place are they leaving for me? Will they not yield it to me until all is ruined? What remains to-day, Gaudé, of the great estates my father received? Why, if I could only count on what he is going to leave me to maintain my position, I would have no choice but to shut myself up in some small country seat, to shoot in my game warrens and cultivate my fields.

GAUDÉ

Do you believe the fortune of the Prince is seriously compromised?

THE COUNT

You know as well as I do. His entire estate has been undermined by his wild extravagances, his madness for building, his incessant purchases of land and art treasures, the herds of parasites and mistresses who devour him, his foolish fêtes and mad gifts. It doesn't worry him. He knows that he will outlive his fortune. But these lands, this château, these ponds, forests, do you think they still belong to him?

GAUDÉ

Who else?

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### THE COUNT

*(Pointing to a group of people who are ascending the stairway left.)*

To them. These paltry lawyers. Master Popelin, the attorney, and his forty thieves. That band of honest pawnbrokers who are carrying off my house piecemeal. The whole of Courtenay is down in black and white in that heavy portfolio he is carrying under his arm. They have come to look over their prize, wolves in sheeps' clothing. Why even I am a morsel of their plunder. But they haven't got me yet. . . . Good morning, Popelin.

*(Enter Popelin, Regnault and Thierry. Popelin greets the Count with respect.)*

SCENE V

The Count; Popelin; Regnault; Gaudé and  
Thierry remain to one side

POPELIN

Monseigneur will permit me to present  
this young man to him? Monseigneur may  
have heard of him before.

THE COUNT

*(Indifferently)*

If you wish.

POPELIN

*(Presenting Regnault)*

My nephew, Mathieu Regnault. He has  
had the honor in times past of being whipped  
for you when you were children.

THE COUNT

I hope it has ceased smarting.

POPELIN

He smarts, Monseigneur, with his zeal to  
serve you.

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THE COUNT

(*To Regnault*)

What has been happening to you?

REGNAULT

I broke off my studies at Paris ten years ago.

POPELIN

The graciousness of his Highness has ordained that he be elevated to the college of Plessis.

THE COUNT

I remember. You were going to take holy orders.

REGNAULT

The vocation didn't suit me. I left the Seminary of St. Sulpice after one year there and took my degree as bachelor of arts and licentiate of laws in order to become an advocate.

THE COUNT

A profession, of course, where the vocation counts less than the voice.

POPELIN

Monseigneur, this young man has already made a name for himself in one or two cases.

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THE COUNT

*(Maintaining throughout the scene an air of  
ironical disdain)*

Such things cause quite a sensation, I believe, among you attorneys.

REGNAULT

Monseigneur, that is because we are entering the age of great lawsuits.

THE COUNT

What do you mean by that?

REGNAULT

There is nothing nowadays that should not be, or shall not be, a matter for debate.

THE COUNT

Indeed? You mean, if it pleases the King.

REGNAULT

*(Coldly)*

It will please him.

THE COUNT

You are letting yourself be fooled by the court. You confuse it, my dear fellow, with that of King Petaud . . .

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"No one respects anything; everyone shouts . . .

Sound-minded people get headaches . . ."

No doubt the confusion has lasted too long. But we shall put it to rights. Monsieur, count on me for that! We want one order of the day for everyone throughout the kingdom. The voice of the King. You good lawyers, you've got your halls for exercising your lungs in. Everything in its place, and every man in his position!

REGNAULT

*(Firmly)*

That is all I ask for. Every man in his place he has a right to.

THE COUNT

You have a large appetite, I see. You take after your uncle.

PEPELIN

*(Obsequiously)*

Monseigneur?

THE COUNT

Master Popelin, will you tell me the position to which you and your nephew have a right?



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POPELIN

I know but one, Monseigneur, and that is  
to serve you.

THE COUNT

I suspect there is another, rather higher.

POPELIN

*(Flattered)*

Monseigneur. . . .

THE COUNT

*(Pointing to the branch of a tree and touching  
his neck lightly. He exits with Gaudé,  
laughing.)*

SCENE VI

Popelin; Regnault; Thierry

REGNAULT

This is too much, uncle! Why did you bring me here to put up with such insolence?

POPELIN

Peace, peace, nephew! Insults are the playthings of Princes. But we have our own.

REGNAULT

Did you hear that last outrageous remark?

POPELIN

Words are words, my friend. *Deeds* speak louder. (*He taps his portfolio significantly.*)

THIERRY

Our future lord and master is out of sorts today.

POPELIN

Our future lord? He isn't even that yet.

THIERRY

It won't be long in coming.

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POPELIN

You think so . . . That depends on the fortune of arms.

THIERRY

What arms?

POPELIN

The war of the succession.

THIERRY

He is the only legitimate heir.

POPELIN

Today. But tomorrow?

THIERRY

What are you getting at?

POPELIN

Me? Oh, nothing. I'm happy as I am. But there are others to whom a change wouldn't come amiss.

THIERRY

You are referring to the Chevalier. And you really think . . . ?

POPELIN

Nothing, nothing. I don't think anything.

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THIERRY

But which of the two horses are you betting on?

POPELIN

It makes no difference to me, whether one or the other wins. I bet on myself. On us, that is. It's no use in running. The Prince's money runs faster. They won't catch up to their property no matter how hard they try. It's got ahead of them. But don't let us worry about it. It won't be lost.

THIERRY

Oh, I'm not uneasy about the noble animal. I know an honest hand or two ready to grab the bridle.

REGNAULT

*(During this dialogue, which he listens to distractedly, wanders up and down on the esplanade and examines the preparations for the fête.)*

What are they getting ready for here?

POPELIN

The Prince is going to receive his friend, the beautiful Septimanie.

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REGNAULT

The Maréchale? You don't mean to tell me that that friendship is still blooming after twenty years.

POPELIN

The bloom, my friend, having been once decreed by the court has become an article of faith. When anyone is pronounced beautiful, it is for eternity. But let us speak of serious matters, Thierry. You have seen the Prince's gallery. As an expert, what do you think it is worth?

THIERRY

Master Popelin, you see this garden, this castle, these groves. . . . Well, the gallery is worth the lot of them put together.

POPELIN

Come, come. As if the fictitious worth of art objects could ever compete with good, palpable values! Why anyone can change the market about for them. Their value depends solely on how much the purchaser wants them.

THIERRY

Of course. But these are desirable. I'll tell you my estimate. Listen, in twenty

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words, I'll summarize the list for you. One thousand eighty-five pictures of the three schools. Two or three hundred designs of the three schools on glass and in prints. Chinese paintings on plate. Bronzes, marbles, terra cottas of Bouchardon, Lequesnoy, Clodion, Pajou . . . I pass over some others. . . . Vases of marble, bronze, amethyst — Egyptian and classic bronzes. Over five hundred engraved and precious stones . . . 1021 medals. Jewelry, boxes, flasks, snuff-boxes in gold . . . et cetera. . . . Set a value of 3,000,000 livres on the lot, and you would have a bargain.

POPELIN

Come, come, Thierry!

THIERRY

I mean it — at the very lowest. Among the paintings alone, I saw a Pietre de Cortone, really fine — I wouldn't take 40,000 livres for it — a portrait by Raphael, beautifully finished, a Guido Reni of the very best, The Wedding at Cana by Murillo, one of the choicest pieces of coloring in the world.

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POPELIN

Well! You make my mouth water. Still, I'd rather eat at my own table than at Cana. But go easy, Thierry. Don't get us worked up. I've got it first hand from a valet of the Count's that one of his first acts after the death of the Prince (that is in case he inherits the property) will be to sell the gallery in order to pay off part of the debt. It wouldn't be wise, in that case, to run up its value.

THIERRY

It really may be that I have exaggerated. The Raphael has never been authenticated, and there are some doubtful bits. That Cortone, for example, may have been touched up here and there.

POPELIN

Well, good or bad, when the times come we can get hold of them, if you like, at a reasonable figure.

THIERRY

Its certainly worth thinking about. Master Popelin, your advice is worth its weight in gold.



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POPELIN

From now on, no more talk. The thing to avoid, now, is any competition.

REGNAULT

I see, uncle, that your business sense never lets anything get by.

POPELIN

Never. The older I get, the more my taste for delicate pleasures grows. Perhaps because the others tempt more rarely. A good dinner excepted, sensuality isn't worth a snap for a man of my years. What really counts is to rope in a fortune, and to put across one of those fine business deals — honest, that goes without saying — in which one's superiority is bolstered up at the expense of some gilded fool.

REGNAULT

Yes, if only destiny lets us show these supercilious nobles that in the future they have us to reckon with!

POPELIN

They'll find it out, my boy! "Adveniet Regnum Nostrum." I flatter myself that

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you'll live long enough to see our money the ruler.

REGNAULT  
(*Disdainfully*)

No! It isn't that I'm counting on.  
Money, money. . . .

POPELIN

Eh! Don't speak ill of it! Money — Do you know all that it represents in work and genius? All the agony people have suffered, the generations of our fathers and grand-fathers harnessed to their plows, to their crafts, their professions, while these fine lords had nothing to do but get born and breed. . . . These lazy masters, I am told, served a purpose at one time. . . . That's a long time ago! I can't remember it myself. What is useful must serve in the present. A people can't live on the credit of past performances. Service is of the day, the hour, the minute.

REGNAULT

Those who do no work have no right to exist.

POPELIN

Where would the kingdom be today if we had not watched and worked for centuries,

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amassing property, repairing the blunders and paying off the follies of these spoilers; keeping society in order, guarding the finances, the laws and justice, preserving the moral integrity of the nation as a whole, striking a good balance on the credit side of virtue! We are hard on ourselves and on others, patient, leaving the fools to their laughter—for we know that the whole structure is built up on our shoulders, and the day will come when the last one laughs best! We have neither titles to, nor our names from, the land. But the land itself we shall have, we have. And the earth's blood—money. Money, the harvest of the Winter sowing, and the seed for the crop of tomorrow. Money. Hat off, my boy! It will be king tomorrow.

### REGNAULT

Money is only a means, an instrument for freeing men. The reign that I want is of another sort: the rule of right. Our rights. My sovereign rights.

### POPELIN

Everything comes to him who waits.

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THIERRY

(*Shaking his fist*)

Everything comes to him who can take it.

POPELIN

Well, well! Is that what they are teaching nowadays in your law schools?

REGNAULT

The law derives from facts, and controls them in turn — until a new fact comes along to modify them. "*In the beginning was the fact.*"

POPELIN

I must say you have changed the Gospel! But, my friend, the old one is good enough. I'm too used to the older phrasing. And for those who know how to use it, the law is the real road to success. With the lever of the law, properly balanced, you can lift a king off his pins if you want to. But there are better things to do with him.

REGNAULT

For example?

POPELIN

Use him. Everything can be made to serve a purpose. But don't smash anything.

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REGNAULT

That's a bit difficult. The shop is badly cluttered. One can't take a step without stumbling over rubbish! If only one could throw it all out!

POPELIN

This young dog here would sweep me out along with it, I'll wager! . . . Hold on, there, nephew. Wait until I'm gone. It grieves me deeply that I won't be on hand to witness your Spring cleaning. But one can't see everything and have everything. What I have had, I still have. . . . Come, then, let's move along! Let's pay our respects to the Prince!

REGNAULT

He will be coming by here. Why should I go to meet him? With your opinions of the nobility, uncle, I am rather astonished at your zeal for groveling.

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POPELIN

Whatever one's private opinions may be it is just as well to respect the conventions. For half a century I have got ahead by observing them, and I count on continuing

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in the same spirit until I die. And God preserve me from omitting one iota of them before our excellent Prince! I owe him my fortune — that is to say, his. Let us not be ungrateful!

REGNAULT

Well, I don't want any of it.

POPELIN

At least come along out of politeness!

REGNAULT

I'd rather stay here and sing the praises of that little beauty over yonder.

*(Huchette is seen, approaching from the right.)*

POPELIN

Don't you recognize her?

REGNAULT

Who is she?

POPELIN

The beautiful gardener's girl. Come, try and remember.

REGNAULT

Rose Huchet . . . Huchette. *(He starts as though to embrace her.)*

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POPELIN

Ha! Ha! You *do* remember. As a child, you bounced her on your knees.

REGNAULT

I'd like to begin again.

POPELIN

Rascal! Well, I'll leave you two friends for a while to get acquainted again. But don't stay too long! And no poaching! Listen, my good fellow! . . . Over here, this way. (*He whispers in Regnault's ear.*) The hunting rights are reserved. (*He exits with Thierry.*)

## SCENE VII

Regnault; Huchette

HUCHETTE

What did he say to you?

REGNAULT

*(Embarrassed)*

Nothing.

HUCHETTE

Something scandalous, I'm sure of that. Bah! Let him laugh. He isn't the only one who knows how to make the time pass. Ah, how happy I am.

REGNAULT

Huchette, are you really the little urchin who used to steal the blackberries in my hedgerow? Let's see if the juice is still on your lips!

HUCHETTE

Down, Fido! If you want sugar, wait until someone puts it on your nose. Never take it unless it is offered.



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REGNAULT

It was merely to see if you were really the one I remembered.

HUCHETTE

You ought to be ashamed to even question it. I recognized *you* quite a long way off.

REGNAULT

Is that why you ran up the stairs so fast?

HUCHETTE

Did I run?

REGNAULT

I saw you coming, without knowing who it was. You were looking around on all sides. Who was it for?

HUCHETTE

No one.

REGNAULT

Some lover you have lost?

HUCHETTE

I'm not worrying. He'll turn up again.

REGNAULT

He has already been found.

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HUCHETTE

What, you too, Regnault?

REGNAULT

What do you mean, "too"? Have you got a herd of them?

HUCHETTE

Certainly. You don't suppose anyone who saw me wouldn't love me.

REGNAULT

I'll grant they show taste. But I'd much rather be the only one.

HUCHETTE

Selfish! Oh, but it's nice to know that one is pretty! Tell me that I am. — No, don't after all. Regnault, I can't see you at all as a lover.

REGNAULT

Let's go down to that little grove, yonder. Then you might see me in a different light.

HUCHETTE

No, not you. Regnault, don't be angry if I think of you as in the past: as a big

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brother, my oldest, strict, serious, grouchy, and always good. A brother who can keep his little sister in order with a few cuffs when she needs them.

REGNAULT

And a kiss or two now and then.

HUCHETTE

I have already given you your share. I don't owe you any more.

REGNAULT

Let's open a new account then. (*He approaches her: she repulses him.*) Ungrateful creature! . . .

HUCHETTE

No, I am not. I love you very much.

REGNAULT

But at a distance.

HUCHETTE

With respect. (*She makes a curtsy.*)  
Like an old friend.

REGNAULT

Couldn't you manage to respect me a little less?

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HUCHETTE

No. To everyone his share.

REGNAULT

Who has the lion's share?

HUCHETTE

The one who knew enough to stay. Why did you go away?

REGNAULT

You are quite right. That's only just. He who quits his place loses it. I have no right to complain. And I shan't complain any more. . . . I shall see you again, my lovely one. You are so good to look at I'll wager you are better to eat. Well, one should be satisfied with what is allotted to him. . . . I shall feast on your eyes . . . your hands also, if it is permitted. And an innocent kiss or so would hardly be improper. You say you have kept for me a sisterly regard. Let us be brother and sister as in the past. . . . And let me love you like an older brother. (*He kisses her.*)

HUCHETTE

But your kisses are warm.

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REGNAULT

Only because the cheek is fresh. But  
won't you turn the other cheek?

HUCHETTE

*(Pushing him away)*

Now, now, that's quite enough.

REGNAULT

Now we are brother and sister.

HUCHETTE

I'm not so sure.

*(She looks around her)*

REGNAULT

What are you looking at?

HUCHETTE

Someone is coming! Hurry, Regnault.  
You must go. It is he!  
*(The Chevalier enters.)*

## SCENE VIII

The Chevalier; Huchette; Regnault

THE CHEVALIER

My love, I have made you wait. I had to pay my respects to that old turtle-dove, the Maréchale.

HUCHETTE

Shame on you to speak of her so.

THE CHEVALIER

And why? I'm quite in love with her.

HUCHETTE

Isn't she your mother?

THE CHEVALIER

They say so. It is quite possible. But she has never told me anything about it. Anyway, the Prince is showing the honors of Courtenay to Septimanie today. The day, for both of them, is a sort of anniversary — one of love's old memories. Both of them are faithful to it, even if neither of them at

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any point in their lives have been particularly troubled about their fidelity. I have just left our Hebe, the ageless one, the immortal, perennially blossoming, with her brilliant smile and malicious brown eyes. Her voice is soft, like a caress. But she has a cat in her. Look out for her claws!

### HUCHETTE

The cat and the turtle-dove. And they don't quarrel, living together in the same cage?

### THE CHEVALIER

That's the great secret of womanhood. The one serves as a decoy for the other.

### HUCHETTE

And you, poor birds, you simply fall into the trap.

### THE CHEVALIER

Both are trapped; the bird-catcher and the bird. A happy game! But where shall we play this evening?

### HUCHETTE

Be quiet. He hears us.

*(She indicates Regnault to him)*

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THE CHEVALIER

*(Noticing him for the first time)*

But who is that long-faced fellow?

HUCHETTE

The nephew of Master Popelin.

REGNAULT

*(Introducing himself with some dignity)*

Master Regnault, advocate.

THE CHEVALIER

That part of it is all right, my man. But we don't want to quarrel right here. Would you mind moving along?

REGNAULT

I am waiting here for the Prince, and until he comes I haven't the slightest intention of leaving.

THE CHEVALIER

Then I suppose you'll have to go, leaving your intentions behind you.

*(He walks up to Regnault who glares at him.)*

HUCHETTE

No, no, my Chevalier! . . . He's a faithful servant of your house. He's under the



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Prince's protection, and I have known him a long time. Regnault, my good friend, leave us. (*To the Chevalier.*) He taught me when I was a child.

### THE CHEVALIER

In that case, sir, I owe you my compliments. Teacher and Nature, working together, have brought a priceless masterpiece to life. And today, the pupil is mistress in her turn. I hope you will permit me to continue the charming lessons! Come, my heart, I am proud of my new position!

### HUCHETTE

Oh, what a way to talk!

### THE CHEVALIER

Put the seal on my lips. (*He kisses her. Regnault makes as if to leave.*) Stay, stay, sir. One owes consideration to a master. Since it was your intention to wait under these elms, make the place yours. It is we, who will retire, with your permission. (*To Huchette.*) Come, my joy, my love, we will rehearse, within the grove there, a couplet or two of our Pastoral in honor of Septimanie. (*He leads Huchette away.*)

## SCENE IX

Regnault (alone)

REGNAULT

That impudent rascal insulted me. I could crush that Adonis and his chicken-bones in my hand. And I am silent, I keep calm, I accept, I cannot reply. He knows I can't reply. We are just the playthings of that insolent class. What a Fate! If only the day will sometime come when we can tramp them under foot.

SCENE X  
Regnault; Guérin

GUÉRIN

Crush him! I'll crush him! I'll take him by the neck, the polecat, and split his skull under my shoe.

REGNAULT

Who are you, anyway?

GUÉRIN

Don't you recognize me, Regnault? I am Guérin. We used to poach together when we were kids. You've still got the mark of a stone I threw at you.

REGNAULT

And you a broken tooth, if I remember rightly.

GUÉRIN

Right here.

REGNAULT

Your hand.

*(They clasp each other's hands)*

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GUÉRIN

We were great comrades.

REGNAULT

What are you doing here?

GUÉRIN

Gamekeeper for the Prince. Yes, I guard their property. But they hunt on mine. Huchette was mine. She was a good girl, and honest. She loved me. That robber came. He pretends to be a friend of the people, just as his older brother affects to scorn them. But fox or wolf, which of the two gets our first shot? He comes into our homes and to our dances. None of our women can resist the honor of being seduced by her master. After he has used them, he throws them back to us. Huchette is wild about him. The madcap — in one minute she threw everything away for his sake. But she isn't stupid. She knows that he will tire of her tomorrow, as he has tired of the others. She doesn't want to look beyond today. She is dizzy with love, like a thrush on a vine. I'll thrash her if I can't bring her to her senses in any other way. But that other — killing is too good for him.

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REGNAULT

Enough of that.

GUÉRIN

I have no intention of shouting it out in public.

REGNAULT

You haven't actually been thinking such madness, Guérin?

GUÉRIN

I have. I shall do it.

REGNAULT

You are beside yourself. It will cost you too dearly.

GUÉRIN

It's worth the price.

REGNAULT

But you are mad. You know what that means — the gallows and the wheel. And it isn't right. The revenge is worse than the crime. Both of them are children, he no less than she. If they love each other, what can we do? Do you think that I haven't suffered, I too? Guérin, I love your Huchette. When

## PALM SUNDAY

they laughed at me a moment ago, I tell you I saw red. But since she doesn't love me in return, what's to be done about it? To avenge oneself won't bring love. And what purpose would such revenge serve? To love or not to love, that's her right. She is free. We are not tyrants. I love her; I pity her, because I know as well as you do that her happiness is a mirage and cannot last. I would like to save her the disillusion that awaits her. But it can't be done. What we sow, we also reap. And I can't even wish the evil-doer dead. I hate him for loving and possessing her, for abusing his rank in taking her. But how could he help loving her? And what else has he to do but abuse his privileges? Don't they abuse everything? Everything is theirs. It is not only their prerogatives, but the whole rotten scheme of things that has to be cleared away. An assassination would mean nothing. One flogs a vicious little boy. One doesn't kill him.

## GUÉRIN

And I shall kill him! Leave it to me, Regnault! Flog him, you say. . . . He had me whipped, the dog — before her!

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REGNAULT

What! A thing like that — to you! What had you done to him?

GUÉRIN

It was two months ago. I haven't been able to think of anything since. I found them together in the wood, caressing — you know. And he laughed in my face. I had my hunting whip, and I ought to have given him a stroke across the face with it. But one is born a slave. Cowardice held me. I raised the whip over her. She at least is my kind. She belongs to me. He had me tied to a tree and flogged by his huntsmen, stripped to the waist.

REGNAULT

And she — she took part in it?

GUÉRIN

She cried a little, as women do, and tried to hide her eyes. But he held her hands so that she should lose nothing of the spectacle. Afterwards, they put me in prison for three months. But I got out the second day, thanks to her. I know that she interceded to prevent my being pursued. The fool protected me. He has forgotten it by this time.

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He is like God the Father; he pardons the offenses and wickedness which he himself has committed. I shall pardon them also — after the account has been squared.

REGNAULT

Pride and Fate must blind them to play with fire this way!

GUÉRIN

For hundreds of years they have seen us, the people, miserable, hating them, prostrate before them, kissing their feet. They forget that there are some things that may put enough backbone into grovellers to make them leap at their throats and kill them. . . . I shall kill them!

*(This last speech of Guérin is spoken with a concentrated ferocity and ends in an explosion of violence.)*

REGNAULT

*(Listening)*

They are coming.

GUÉRIN

It is the Prince. Goodbye. We shall meet again.

*(He exits hurriedly — Regnault follows him.)*



## SCENE XI

The Chevalier; Huchette; Peasant Girls; Musicians. Afterwards, the Prince; the Maréchale; the Count and Countess and their suite

*(The Chevalier appears leading on a little troop of young peasant girls decked with flowers and ribbons, representing the flowers of Spring. He is masked as a gardener. A little orchestra of chamber music, violins and viols, hautboys, pipes, harpsichord, is grouped under the colonnade. Master Momus directs them.)*

### THE CHEVALIER

My jewels of Spring  
And flower girls,  
Weave for the Goddess reigning here,  
With flowers in bloom, the pretty buds  
Of your own rosy breasts.

Standing on tiptoe, Terpsichore is waiting —

And you, Master Momus, King of musicians  
Tune your viols and pipes in cadence —  
Strike on your harpsichord.

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For Hebe is coming. Behold her approaching.

Begin, my charming ones!

*(The orchestra plays the rondeau of the Indes Galantes, Second Part, first aria of the Flowers, and the young girls begin to dance while the suite of the Maréchale appears on the esplanade. The Maréchale is in a sedan chair; close beside her walks the Prince [in a costume of golden yellow, with the medal of the Order of the Holy Ghost]. Then the Countess and the Count. Having arrived at the center and rear of the colonnade, from whence the full perspective of the garden is seen, the Maréchale descends from her chair, the Prince giving her his hand.*

Tenor Air of the *Indes Galantes*  
On these shores a flame-like spirit  
Offers you its gentle vows  
You who merit to be worshipped  
By a heart that loves but you.

*Then the rondeau: "Little Air of the Rose" during which the Rose [Rose Huchet] recites a little greeting to the Maréchale)*

HUCHETTE

*(As the Rose)*

Lilac, hyacinth and rose . . .

Gather your subjects, Oh Queen of Spring!

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For we have been sleeping,  
Your garden was frozen  
Awaiting your coming!  
Hebe comes first, and Spring follows after  
After her smile, her beauty —  
While under your footsteps flowers are  
blossoming  
Hyacinth, lilac and rose.

## THE MARÉCHALE

My pretty flower, it gives me joy  
To bring this Spring-time hour,  
For in your bloom, I see my own  
Enhanced by Venus' power.  
If where I walk, the gardens here,  
Are quickened as by Spring  
Then you must show, my pretty one,  
How all may share, beneath this sun,  
The joy of blossoming.

## Soprano Air

The bloom of the loveliest rose  
Must fade, when her bloom fades.  
What matters it, if on this shore  
New flowers grow at every hour,  
Its charm can never be the same  
As when you blossomed here.

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### THE CHEVALIER

*(In gardener's dress, presents Huchette and  
two peasant girls dressed as flowers.)*

Madame, to you I bring  
The best my garden bears  
They are its native flowers.  
The rose is freed of thorns.  
And I have tended them  
To make for you a wreath,  
A scented, lovely wreath,  
To press its unspoiled lips  
Upon your lovely hand.

### THE MARÉCHALE

Ah! Thief of love! This flower, this lovely  
flower,

'Tis you who have gathered it.

I read in your downcast eyes,

I read through your gallant masque.

*(She raises his chin in her hand.)*

Go, shameless one, you are right

Gather the flowers of life,

Gardener of love, my robber!

### THE PRINCE

Madame, would you like to rest here for  
a while? We can see the sunset behind the  
forest.

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### THE MARÉCHALE

*(Humming an air from The Feast of Hebe.*

*Speaking rather than singing.)*

O, forest dear to love

How beautiful your glades . . .

Do you remember the air . . . ?

. . . Your dusky, still enclosures

Gathering, with their shadows,

The desire of my heart, and my lover.

### THE PRINCE

The lover is always there.

### THE MARÉCHALE

But Pleasures have broken camp!

### THE PRINCE

Never shall a Courtenay give ground,  
either in pleasure or in battle.

### THE MARÉCHALE

Courtenay, no. But time. It shows its  
talons.

### THE PRINCE

I kiss them. Its feet are beautiful, from  
ankle to toe.

*(He makes as if to kiss the feet of the Maréchale)*

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### THE MARÉCHALE

Prince, the time is passed when these feet could scamper about the country with you. How gracefully they danced in the meadows and forests! Today is their day of rest.

### THE PRINCE

The feet of Venus are not made to touch the earth. They are, like her arms, made for love.

### THE MARÉCHALE

There is a time for everything. Not so, Countess?

### THE COUNTESS

There is time for nothing. Life passes to no purpose.

### THE MARÉCHALE

Ah, no! I have found it good, and I have filled it well.

### THE COUNTESS

The Heavens have showered their gifts on you, Madame. And you are generous. You do not keep them to yourself.

### THE MARÉCHALE

No, no, to give is to receive. The secret of pleasure. And I haven't passed the tree without taking the fruit.

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THE PRINCE

(*Regarding the Chevalier*)

But he is charming.

THE MARÉCHALE

(*To the Countess*)

Are you a miser?

THE COUNTESS

The treasure is lacking.

THE MARÉCHALE

One has sometimes to stoop to find it.  
Open your eyes, your hands! Youth; every-  
thing goes to Youth!

THE COUNTESS

I have but one enjoyment — my melan-  
choly.

THE MARÉCHALE

Ah, yes, the most fashionable of all. I  
prefer my own. And yesterday at the  
*Orpheus* of your Chevalier Gluck, did you  
weep enough?

THE COUNTESS

Ah, Madame . . . My fill indeed . . .  
What beauty.

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### THE MARÉCHALE

That's the only thing in which I am deficient. But one can't have everything. I leave it to you, little fountain. Since dropping my garb of innocence I don't remember shedding a tear.

### THE COUNT

Madame, the eyes of Heaven are about to avenge themselves. The sky is about to weep.

### THE PRINCE

You mean, sir, that a storm is coming?

### THE COUNT

It is possible, Monseigneur. You should know best.

### THE PRINCE

How do you mean that?

### THE COUNT

Like Jupiter, you assemble the storm clouds.

### THE PRINCE

Do you mean to insinuate that I am aggravating the disorders within the kingdom?



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### THE COUNT

At least you lend them the protection of your name.

### THE PRINCE

Don't speak of my name. You have betrayed that name.

### THE COUNT

Which of us two, I wonder? He who supported the insolent rebellion of the Parliaments against the King — or he who ranged himself beside this King to support him?

### THE PRINCE

In addition to the King, sir, there are the laws of the realm; and the officers of justice are the rightful guardians. When the King wrongs them, he fails himself, and he wrongs the whole nation. When he refuses to play his proper rôle, it is for us, the Princes of the Blood, to assume it and to make ourselves protectors of the law and of the injured nation.

### THE COUNT

The will of the King is the law of the nation.

### THE PRINCE

The King is only the first servant of the nation.

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THE COUNT

And you, Monseigneur, are the servant of the King.

THE PRINCE

And you, sir, are my rebellious servant.

THE COUNT

It is you who gave the example in disobedience.

THE PRINCE

And if I may ask, do you realize where you are?

THE COUNT

I know. On your property, from which the King is about to exile you.

THE PRINCE

And I — I shall exile you . . .

THE MARÉCHALE

Eh, gentlemen, your discourses are the finest I have heard. They brought me back to a sharp little bit of dialogue at the Comédie. Only the rhyme is lacking. Perhaps a little reason, too. But as to the latter, the lack of it is rather another point in comparison with the Comédie. What in the world is all this

## PALM SUNDAY

talk about King and realm? There is only one kingdom here: mine. And all this quarreling. No more disputes from now on. Our will as ruler is that swords be returned to their scabbards. In our kingdom where the order of the day must be: "For our good pleasure," the privilege of speech is granted our subjects only to be used for pleasant deceptions.

### THE PRINCE

*(Kissing her hand)*

You are our Ægeria. You will pardon me for forgetting a moment in your presence the great art of wisdom which you have taught me.

### THE COUNTESS

This grand art, what is it, Madame? Is it never to feel anything?

### THE MARÉCHALE

No, my friend. It is never to say anything. The whole social art which is the masterpiece of our race, is to throw a veil of courtesy and good taste over our thoughts and the differences that arise between us. We do not cheat each other. We are honest players. We know who we are. We know

## PALM SUNDAY

that, as long as we live, we live together, at bottom, like little wolves. But it is right there that the game comes in, my dear, and the rules of the game. To know how to live together, to taste together the joys of intercourse and the subtle spice of animosity.

### THE CHEVALIER

It is what they call in the art of cooking, the seasoning.

### THE MARÉCHALE

So you know that! You are quite an excellent pastry cook, they tell me.

### THE CHEVALIER

Ask Huchette: I always cook in her oven.

### THE PRINCE

As Monsieur Rousseau has taught us, I have had my sons trained to a profession. The Count does a bit of blacksmithing, and the little Chevalier, to preserve his white hands, dips them in the flour. He does very well indeed with bread and cakes.

### THE MARÉCHALE

Cupid as cook!

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### THE CHEVALIER

I am official taster. I have mastered the high art of what to eat, and I practise with success all the alchemies of the palate.

### THE MARÉCHALE

*(To the Countess)*

And the little Viscount, Madame? What are you going to bring him up to do?

### THE COUNTESS

He is still too young to begin studying a profession. Just at the moment, he is gathering herbs with Monsieur Rousseau. You will see him directly.

### THE COUNT

We are letting him learn, with his *Georgics*, the difficult art of agriculture.

### THE COUNTESS

*(To the Maréchale)*

Men have a thousand means of filling their lives. They leave us nothing but the profession of living.

### THE MARÉCHALE

The most noble art of all is to bear gracefully the pleasures and pains of life. From

## PALM SUNDAY

all its mingled spices we can mix an elixir for the Gods, composed one part of love and three of indifference.

### THE COUNTESS

If one could only get a flask of it from you!

### THE MARÉCHALE

Is it the indifference that appeals to you — or love?

### THE COUNTESS

It is your secret of enjoying everything, and blending all in harmony. Everything wounds me! Everything annoys and distresses me. In love, I suffer, and I perish of boredom.

### THE MARÉCHALE

My good Arethuse, if I indulged my heart, like you, with sentimentalities, as your doctor, Monsieur Pomme, drowns his patients in veal and chicken broth — without mentioning the moist music of your Chevalier Gluck — I would say quite the same thing. One shouldn't cultivate the aquatic plants — solitary dreams and melancholy. The sun, the open air, a discreet liaison, mixing with

## PALM SUNDAY

simple people, should clear your head — with now and then, perhaps, a thimbleful of Château-Margaux.

### THE COUNTESS

Ah, don't deprive me of melancholy, Madame. It is quite all that I have. I flee from it and reach for it again. It passes away the dark days; and it alone can make me forget how boring everything is that doesn't touch it.

### THE MARÉCHALE

*(Bending toward the Countess, in a low voice, while the men converse.)*

You only say half of what you mean. But even that is too much. I can read what your heart wants to say and does not dare. Your kind has its failings, and the favors and punishments of the blindfolded God are not always justly distributed. Your fingers have been torn on the hawthorn hedges that border the paths of Springtime. But these misfortunes are our common heritage. None of us is alone in having received at the hands of the Fates unhappy unions, disappointed liaisons and beautiful hopes which betray us. But since we have left our childhood

## PALM SUNDAY

behind us, we must banish from our lips the tremors of disaster. We play at the King's table, and our King is Life. One must win and lose with the same countenance. One always loses, at bottom, anyway. But let us lose gracefully!

THE COUNTESS

*(With a bitter gesture)*

You, you have won, Madame.

THE MARÉCHALE

Does it seem so to you? On the surface, to be sure, one sees twenty years of the most dignified and perfect friendship. But do people see under the fine polish of that appearance, the secret flaws, the mutual infidelities, the deception, the boredom, the wide gaps that separate even perfectly united hearts? But, my dear, that is the way of life. Only little people can fail to make themselves happy in some way or other. For us, it is a point of honor, come what may, to make life good. And at the close of life, is God.

THE PRINCE

*(Who has drawn close and has overheard the final remarks — with gentle irony.)*

The God of excellent accommodations.



## PALM SUNDAY

He keeps the hostelry at the sign of *The Close of Life*. All along the road, no one notices him, no one thinks of him. But he waits for you on his doorsill, hat under his arm, Mesdames, when you are really tired, and says to you:

“Enter, the table is set, and the food is the best. Pleasure of life, without its pain, delights in serving you.”

### THE MARÉCHALE

Prince, you joke. But why shouldn't God be just as gallant to us as you are? He is well born and has the best of manners. Really, I believe it. He exists. He ought to. We need good living and beautiful fashions just as we need a mirror. Why should you want him to be remiss in his duty?

### THE PRINCE

God is too honest a man, Madame, to forget the respect he owes you.

### THE MARÉCHALE

You treat the subject with flippancy, Monseigneur. That is wrong. One must have faith. I am a believer.

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### THE PRINCE

But I have my faith. One must follow the fashion. When I was a child, God appeared in two costumes here. He was either courtier or clown to the old King. As disguises, they were hardly the thing for one of my position. But once you've accepted that, the rest follows all right.

### THE MARÉCHALE

*(Decidedly)*

You have no right to complain. — (*Changing her tone.*) And at worst, Monseigneur, if we are wrong, who knows better?

### THE PRINCE

*(Catching sight of Popelin and his group among his retinue. During the last moments they have been edging toward the inner circle.)*

Not one chance in the world of a mistake if we turn the matter over to Master Popelin, my notary. (*He presents him to the Maréchale.*) The one man in France who is supreme authority on what a loan can yield. . . . Popelin, what would you think of a loan to God of our souls?

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POPELIN

Monseigneur, as a loan it might be pretty dangerous. My better judgment would be to refuse committing a client of mine to such a transaction.

THE PRINCE

Would you risk it yourself?

POPELIN

Oh, me. I have nothing to lose. The borrower would simply be cheating himself.

THE COUNT

*(Scornfully)*

I can see that the lender is a skillful appraiser.

THE PRINCE

*(Presenting two supernumeraries to the Maréchale)*

Madame, I want to present to you the two most useless members of my household: one is my chaplain, and the other my treasurer. *(Noticing Regnault.)* And who is this young man?

POPELIN

Monseigneur has a way of forgetting his acts of kindness. It is one of your protégés, my nephew, Regnault, Advocate.

## PALM SUNDAY

THE PRINCE

(*Affably*)

I may be excused, sir, for not having recognized you at once. You were a child when I saw you last. You have returned to us a man. I have heard of your successes. You have done honor to the trust imposed in you.

REGNAULT

He will know how to repay with honor the debt he owes his benefactor.

THE PRINCE

Don't speak of debts, sir. I don't act out of desire for gratitude.

POPELIN

He is too well bred to be slow in gratitude to such a great Prince.

THE PRINCE

I have no need of it. I bestow favors, because it pleases me to do so.

REGNAULT

I am with you in that, Monseigneur. I am far from pretending that gratitude is

## PALM SUNDAY

binding. If I am under obligation, it is in the spirit of the gift — freely.

THE COUNT

*(Dryly)*

There is no comparison.

REGNAULT

The Count wouldn't grant people even the freedom to do good?

THE COUNT

There are good and bad servants. But they must serve together.

REGNAULT

Those who serve today may not serve always.

THE PRINCE

Don't take that word in bad part, sir — even though I never use it myself. Everyone serves — great and small. There is nothing to be ashamed of in that. And the most distinguished title to honor in our knighthood, as you know, has always been "loyal servant."

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### THE CHEVALIER

*(Foolishly)*

For my part I love pride, even in simple people. And it is far from displeasing to me to observe everywhere in the spirit of the French people, a ferment of liberty. It makes the pleasure of enforcing obedience even greater. We command them for their own good — and for mine, of course. I love them. I love to be loved. And I would not for the world deprive the poor people of that gentlest of all pleasures — the liberty of loving us.

### THE MARÉCHALE

You talk through your hat, little fool. But looking at you one could almost believe that what you say is true. Little glutton of love, you would like the whole world to love you. And after all, how could it help loving you a little?

### THE PRINCE

We have indeed been talking nonsense. But this surpasses all. I sometimes see a little of myself in this fellow — with less brain, of course and (even if he talks more and we say nothing) perhaps a little more

## PALM SUNDAY

heart. He will be very happy. And he will bring about my ruin with his nonsense.

### THE MARÉCHALE

Don't look so far into the future.

### THE PRINCE

But, on the contrary, let's. It was the King who said: "After us, the flood."

### THE MARÉCHALE

And here we are, waiting for Noah's Ark. A happy family — surrounded by our animals.

### THE PRINCE

A subject for Greuze!

### THE CHEVALIER

Come, let us have that music of Rameau.  
*(He makes a sign to the group of musicians and the dancers; and the little musical fête begins again.)*

Air of Hebe, from the *Indes Galantes*, First Concerto.

*Then the Musette En Rondeau to which the peasant girls dance.*

*Toward the close of the dance, the Chevalier,*

## PALM SUNDAY

*who has been gazing down toward the foot of the grand stairway under the esplanade turns gaily to the Maréchale and says:)*

Madame, here is an *Entrée*, that is quite an innovation for our Pastorals. It will be staged before you by our first subject, our king of the dance, the prince of shepherds and the shepherd of Princes.

### THE MARÉCHALE

What is our little clown talking about?

### THE PRINCE

But who is that coming? Isn't that . . . ?

### THE COUNTESS

It's the little Viscount, with Monsieur Rousseau.



## SCENE XII

The same characters as in the preceding scene; Jean-Jacques Rousseau and the Little Viscount

*(Jean-Jacques Rousseau appears, accompanied by a child of eight or ten. He is sixty-two years old, small, a little bowed, short-sighted, habitually embarrassed. He walks with a stumbling gait. Arriving on the esplanade, where the dancing shepherdesses surround him for a moment, he looks like some old nightbird, blinking in the sun.<sup>1</sup> He carries in his hand, rather awkwardly, a bouquet of leaves and periwinkle blossoms. He stands for a few moments, dumfounded, his little eyes downcast and blinking, face to face with the group who gaze at him with a curiosity not devoid of irony — but always preserving an external graciousness.*

*(N. B. The Prince and the ladies are seated for the moment. The Count is standing to the right of the Maréchale. The Chevalier flutters around among the dancers. The*

<sup>1</sup> The sun, red and gold, sets during the scene.

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*group of plain people forms itself a little to one side, a short distance away.*

*(At the sight of Rousseau, the Prince rises and walks toward him with great courtesy. But Rousseau does not see him. His dim gaze is turned in another direction.)*

THE MARÉCHALE

So there you are, my shepherd.

THE COUNT

Our eccentric shepherd.

JEAN-JACQUES

The shepherd without a flock.

THE MARÉCHALE

*(Indicating the child)*

And this little lamb?

JEAN-JACQUES

He is the only one I have. The others have strayed away.

THE COUNT

I can well believe it. They like to graze in their neighbors' meadows. The whole kingdom is full of that kind of thing.

## PALM SUNDAY

### THE CHEVALIER

Why don't you guard them better?

### JEAN-JACQUES

It is they who guard me. Under the false fleece, they are nothing but disguised wolves. What am I saying? Wolves follow freely the instincts given them by nature. They never attack except when they are hungry. When they are filled, they live and let live. But what is this hatred, coldness, secretiveness, scheming, which gnaws the human wolves; wolves in that terrible conspiracy that surrounds an unfortunate, harmless, innocent man who asks for nothing except to love every living being?

*(During this speech, the Prince has taken Rousseau's hand. Recognizing him, the latter salutes him with awkward haste. The Prince introduces him to the group with gracious solicitude for his dim eyesight, keeping to his pace, and discreetly pointing out the steps to him. They come, finally, to the Maréchale. Rousseau, talking all the while, pays more attention to his thoughts than his footsteps.)*

## PALM SUNDAY

### THE MARÉCHALE

What were you saying, my shepherd? But what a terrible tale it is! Where are all these wolves?

### THE COUNT

One might as well ask where the lamb is. (*Jean-Jacques, without availing himself of the Prince's invitation to sit down beside him, raises his hands and his eyes toward heaven.*)

### JEAN-JACQUES

Supreme Judge of the World, who readest to the bottom of our hearts. Thou canst judge of them and me. Thou knowest whether or not I am an evil man! But I am evil, yes, yes. And still thy divine fire is in me. This miserable being is a temple of holiness. Ah, unhappy ones, who cannot respect the divine presence within themselves! Ah, faithless ones, it is divinity that your sarcasms wound, when they pretend to attack the unfortunate Jean-Jacques. For what secret motives could justify that dark design, that evil work, plotted in a conspiracy of silence against a simple man, without renown, without polish; a man who shuns society and makes a fool of himself

## PALM SUNDAY

whenever he appears in it, a feeble spirit, sluggish and slow in thought, sensitive, it is true, given to ecstasy, worshipper of beauty and justice, possessing his rare moments of pure joy when the Divine spirit lifts him above his own abasement, but a man whose natural state is one of spiritual inertia, rooted, heavy. And even that you would dispute with me? Why not leave me to my fate?

### THE MARÉCHALE

No one disturbs you except you yourself, my shepherd. You are quite free to live in the shade, ignored of all. But we should lose too much by that. And you too, I often think. Although you will quarrel with me for saying it, you need a theater for your tragic gestures, your imaginary plots, your fine figures of speech. . . . But come over here, *Guillot!* Sit down here, close to me. Here you are sheltered.

*(Jean-Jacques sits down between the Maréchale and the Prince.)*

### THE MARÉCHALE

And where have you been walking today?  
*(Jean-Jacques does not answer. He seems not*

## PALM SUNDAY

*to have heard. The child who has come close to the Maréchale, replies for him.)*

THE CHILD

We have been watching the woodsmen working at the underbrush.  
(*The sound of an axe far-off, is heard during this part of the scene.*)

THE PRINCE

Did you speak to them?

THE CHILD

M. Rousseau made them a little speech.

THE COUNTESS

A speech? What did he say?

THE CHILD

He said: "Unhappy men! Strike not! Spare these Kings of the forest. They are alive as you are. . . ." (*Interrupting himself.*) Madame, do you, too, believe that they are alive?

THE MARÉCHALE

Surely.

THE CHILD

Then why do people kill them?

## PALM SUNDAY

THE PRINCE

Because they have lived their time.

JEAN-JACQUES

*(Absorbed)*

The past is destroyed by men of the past.

THE CHILD

But, Monseigneur, how about you?

THE PRINCE

Yes?

THE CHILD

You are alive.

*(The Prince and the Maréchale laugh)*

THE PRINCE

People like us, my child, we know how to leave on time.

THE MARÉCHALE

For my part, I am like our shepherd here. I weep over the destruction of our beautiful forest glades.

THE PRINCE

The fashion, nowadays, calls for a good deal of cutting, and I find nothing unreasonable in that. The trees suffocate us.

## PALM SUNDAY

Unless one guards against it, Nature will devour us. We must, from time to time, vindicate our rights, and open up spaces for the fresh air and sunshine to penetrate the pervasive shadows of our forests.

POPELIN

*(In a low voice to Regnault)*

And their destruction fills our pockets with the good, ringing coins.

THE MARÉCHALE

*(To the Child)*

But let's return to the Sermon in the Forest. What did the woodsmen say?

THE CHILD

Madame, they laughed.

JEAN-JACQUES

They laid their heads together and whispered about me. They, too, are in the conspiracy.

POPELIN

*(Jeering)*

A conspiracy of common sense. Like any other poor animal, when it is attacked, it defends itself.



## PALM SUNDAY

THE COUNT

*(To the Child)*

I am sorry, my child, that you have wasted a day in such company. (*He indicates Rousseau.*) Did you seek him out?

THE CHILD

*(Indicating the Prince)*

It was Monseigneur who told me I might go with Monsieur Rousseau.

THE COUNT

I hope, then, that in the future Monseigneur will excuse you from such company.

THE PRINCE

I find it worthy of myself. Do you not consider it good enough for you and your child?

THE COUNT

*(Coldly)*

Monseigneur, I am deeply grieved to have to reply, "No."

THE PRINCE

I see. You find it less exalted, for example, than the company of Madame Becu to whom you played Cavalier at Versailles?

## PALM SUNDAY

### THE COUNT

I am bound to show respect to all whom the King honors with his friendship.

### THE PRINCE

Show a little respect, then, toward those whose friendship I consider an honor!

### THE COUNT

I pray, Monseigneur, that you may spare me the pain of refusing you. I shall not trust my son to a corrupter of the spirit.

### THE PRINCE

Genius and misfortune can hardly be a pernicious example for a child.

### THE COUNT

We need reason and not genius. And as to the misfortunes he has brought on himself, he has been able to exploit them well enough. From his kind of sentimentality, I turn as from a pestilence. We need to be hard — and my son shall learn how to be — in order to uphold our position against the assaults of shameless sophisms and the lying complacency that encourages them.

## PALM SUNDAY

### THE PRINCE

I have no such exaggerated fear of intellectual pitfalls. When they exist, I judge it cowardly to shun them. I hold it a prerogative of our rank to cultivate art and the sensibilities as we do our gardens. Just as I enjoy watching rare plants of all climates flowering in my conservatory, I like to keep around me intellectual exotics, and I haven't such a feeble heart that I feel myself endangered. Energy in any form pleases me, and especially spiritual energy. I enjoy its extravagances, just like one of those riotous growths whose disorderly profusion covers my old walls — under the supervision of my gardeners, of course. I don't even try to conceal the attraction that these exotic plants with their poisonous juices exercise on me. In the same spirit, our fathers kept lions and leopards in their menageries. They are handsome. I love them. I love even their tricks and their claws. I am not disturbed about the risks involved; they don't concern me anyway.

### THE COUNT

You neglect entirely the risk to others. You throw off all responsibility for the future.

## PALM SUNDAY

You were speaking of poisoned spirits who enchant you. They are a threat to the whole social body, and you protect them. You shelter in your house, in defiance of public sentiment, that man who has been convicted by law, and whose sentence has not been raised. And, following your example, some close their eyes and others hasten to fondle the serpent that hides in the flowers.

### THE MARÉCHALE

Fie! What extravagance. Don't wear that face of Rhadamanthus, Monsieur! My shepherd a serpent. The lover of simple nature, a songster, inspired by virtue. . . .

### THE COUNTESS

He who opens the fountains of the heart!  
Our best friend! Our consoler.

### THE COUNT

Mesdames, in any age the serpent is the best friend of Eve.

### THE CHEVALIER

Eh? Long life to the serpent. The friend of Eve is our friend. It is thanks to him that

## PALM SUNDAY

we have an apple to share between us. Good little serpent with the brown eyes, you are welcome to my garden.

### THE COUNTESS

Chut! You should be ashamed of yourself talking that way before this unworldly man!

### THE PRINCE

He isn't listening to us, Madame. He is off in his dream. His spirit is brooding away from us.

*(Rousseau appears indeed, absorbed and insensible to what they are saying.)*

### THE COUNT

*(Staring at Rousseau)*

I often wonder whether he is stupid or crafty. But either way, I despise the man. And I don't deny the power of his poison. I admire his genius. I regard it even more highly than you, for if you see in him nothing but flowery phrases and bird-songs and harmless expressions, I see the fires of destruction in him. I see the spark that may set off the mine laid under my house. *(He turns to Regnault who has made no effort to*

## PALM SUNDAY

*hide his deep veneration for Rousseau.*) I call you to witness this gentleman here. In spite of his shocked expression listening to my impieties, one look at his Anabaptist face is enough to show you how ardent a worshipper he is of his Saint Jean! Let him inform us, Madame, what he has learned from the sermons of your Shepherd of the Mount.

REGNAULT

*(Proudly)*

Our rights. He who has stirred throughout France the sparks of conscience and civic pride by the example of free republics, he has taught us our rights.

THE COUNT

And what are they?

REGNAULT

*(With a brutal boldness)*

The same as yours.

*(A brief silence follows.)*

THE COUNT

You can put on a bold front, sir. You are frank. I thank you for that. You don't fool us and you are not fooled any more than I

## PALM SUNDAY

by these insipid little games of pipe and pastoral that these people, whether they are childish or old, try to rock themselves to sleep with. We are enemies. Would that we might be real enemies soon, not under a mask, but in the open day, each in his place with those of his own rank, to fight for his faith and his rights.

### REGNAULT

Would that we might!

*(Jean-Jacques has risen without being noticed. His expression has changed. He regards the assemblage silently, with a tragic expression. When he commences to speak, everyone turns toward him and looks at him without dreaming of interrupting.)*

### JEAN-JACQUES

Lord, I have come like thee to bring not peace but the sword. Forgive me! It is thou who hast desired it, and not me . . . this world of brilliant things shall disappear. The smiles hide nothing but hatred, and Cain walks among us. The father hates the son and the son the father, and brother hates brother; the wife hates her husband and the servant the master. And all speak of

## PALM SUNDAY

their rights. . . . And not one of their duties. . . .

Courage! . . . Hew down the tree, ministers of death. You are working for those still living. . . .

*(The strokes of the axes are heard from the forest.)*

Ah! The axe is in the tree! Strike, . . . strike . . . Again a blow. . . . The tree trembles. . . . And still they cut away . . . And what it is, I see now. Someone stronger than they are leads them but they cannot perceive it. . . . The same powerful hand that grips me in iron grasp. . . . But I am not alone. . . . It leads me . . . It leads the persecuted and the persecutors. . . . Everyone here, it guides. . . . Where? Where dost thou lead us? Where but to the earth again . . . Dust to dust. . . .

*(The crash of the falling tree is heard.)*

The tree has fallen.

*(The general silence deepens while Jean-Jacques sits down and returns to his distant brooding.)*

## THE CHEVALIER

*(The first to regain his composure)*

What songs he sings, the old raven of the ark.



## PALM SUNDAY

THE PRINCE

He croaks always of the flood.

THE COUNTESS

Raven, read my future for me!

THE MARÉCHALE

Not mine. I don't want to know the end.  
Rather, sing to me of the past.

THE PRINCE

The present is good enough for me. What difference does the rest of it make? The past? It is gone. The future? I shall be no more.

REGNAULT

*(Deeply moved)*

What was it you were saying? Explain it to us, Monsieur Rousseau.

*(Jean-Jacques looks at him vaguely, without comprehending.)*

THE PRINCE

He has already forgotten it.

THE COUNT

He never knew what he meant anyway.

## PALM SUNDAY

POPELIN

*(Ironically)*

That's the kind of a person they call inspired.

*(The village bells are heard. Jean-Jacques, aroused again, lays his hand on the arm of the Maréchale.)*

JEAN-JACQUES

Listen!

THE MARÉCHALE

Of course. Tomorrow is Palm Sunday.

JEAN-JACQUES

*(Returning to his reverie)*

Palm Sunday! How well I remember . . .  
Her blue eyes. . . . Her beautiful ashen  
hair. . . . Her angel's smile. . . . I was just  
seventeen . . . She was twenty-eight. . . .  
She turned at the sound of my voice. . . .  
The silence. . . . Only the murmuring of  
the little brook beside her garden . . . and  
the flood of joy that sang in my heart . . .  
O lovely mother. . . .

*(The Maréchale and the Countess, moved, have come up to him. The Maréchale takes his hand. The Countess, standing, bends over and lays her hand on Jean-Jacques' shoulder.)*

## PALM SUNDAY

### THE COUNTESS

Poor man, dreaming always of his lost happiness.

### THE MARÉCHALE

You have returned to it again, bird of the May nights, my nightingale of love and melancholy!

### JEAN-JACQUES

Happiness lost? Ah no, I have it still. I have never known any other . . . Never has it failed me . . . That moment of joy, so full, so pure . . . A half century of life has flowed by since then. And her charm is still enough to compensate for all I have suffered. My Spring. And the little blue eyes that gleam from the hedges. My periwinkles. (*He kisses his bouquet of periwinkles.*)

(*In the tense silence that follows, the bells of the village sound again.*)

### JEAN-JACQUES

Palm-Sunday . . . !

And eight days, the Easter of Blood. . . .

But I shall not be here . . .

## PALM SUNDAY

*(His dim eyes wander about among the assembled faces.)*

And there are others, I see, who will go in time to escape the destruction they have prepared.

THE COUNT

*(Rudely)*

Destruction, and you. . . . What are you but a destroyer? Do you know yourself what you are?

JEAN-JACQUES

I know myself. I have had my part to play in the destruction. It was destined so. The mason does as he is bidden. And I have paid the price. I have paid with my whole life. And I shall continue to pay, long after that life is over. As long as there are men in the world, Jean-Jacques will be crucified. . . .  
*(The Chevalier and Huchette laugh.)*

JEAN-JACQUES

*(Regarding them with pity)*

You laugh, . . . poor children. *(He puts a hand on Huchette's head, and looks at the Count and Regnault.)* Unhappy ones! *(He kisses the child.)* You will remember . . .

## PALM SUNDAY

*(He has already left the circle and turns to face the assemblage.)* You will pardon me . . .

Goodbye . . .

*(He starts off. But in turning sharply, he stumbles over a step and almost falls. Huchette hurries to his assistance; at the same time, Regnault, rushing up, takes him by the arm to help him. But Jean-Jacques repulses them angrily.)*

JEAN-JACQUES

*(Resolutely)*

I do not depend on you! I have no need of your help. I am free . . . free. . . .

*(He wanders off. Everyone gazes after him until he has disappeared.)*

### SCENE XIII

The same characters without Rousseau.  
After an embarrassed pause

THE PRINCE

(*Smiling*)

The visionary!

THE MARÉCHALE

I really love him. It is such a shame he could never get over his mania for preaching. He was made to sing of Spring and flowers. But his Genevese God is a bitter God. A God with heavy eyebrows, sour, a spoilsport, bourgeois — it makes me shudder to think of him. If God isn't on our side, I refuse to be on his. But my God, Heaven be praised, is a polished gentleman; and I am really convinced that the Bible bores him. Holy books are holy: that is true! But only at church. On the outside, we prefer *Clarisse*. And even despite his preaching, we ought to pardon that moon-struck man a good deal for the sake of his Julie.

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### THE PRINCE

He amuses me and at the same time stirs me to pity. He is really a poet. One must value his sermons accordingly. It's a waste of time to quarrel with them. The importance which the gentlemen of the affirmative and negative (*indicating the Count and Regnault*) attach to his nonsense is hardly less amusing than the nonsense itself — And for the rest of it, that tale of the earth trembling — it may be so. On the other hand it may be his legs. I wouldn't want to take sides on the issue. But I think everything goes well enough.

### REGNAULT

A storm would clear the atmosphere at any rate.

### THE COUNT

The storm is still unborn.

### THE CHEVALIER

Whether tomorrow is fair or foul, we shall know how to weather it.

### THE MARÉCHALE

As to whatever the future holds, perhaps our philosopher is right. But to dwell too

## PALM SUNDAY

much on the future, is bad taste. Let come what will. An honest man is always prepared.

### THE PRINCE

We must leave to our successors, the risk, the danger and the supreme pleasure of the adventure. Haven't we received them in our turn from our ancestors? (*Addressing the Chevalier.*) We shall pass them on to you, intact. Without mortgage or lien. That is the one sure thing about our heritage: the one thing in which it shows increase.

### THE CHEVALIER

And I accept it. It is the one thing above all others I accept with most pleasure, Monseigneur, you may entrust it to me.

### THE PRINCE

To you, my son. (*He speaks meaningfully, and with his back turned toward the Count.*) It shall be yours together with the rest of it. You shall have all.

### POPELIN

(*In a low voice to Thierry*)

And that's not much to boast about. But there are two dogs to fight over that ghost



## PALM SUNDAY

of a bone. Look at the green eyes of the one they are snatching it away from. (*He indicates the Count.*)

THE PRINCE

(*Rising*)

The sun is setting; and the cold wind, rising, will bring back the clouds. Madame, it is time to go in.

THE MARÉCHALE

I love the day now dying. I love the night that comes.

THE COUNTESS

(*Also rising*)

And the same day and night are indifferent to you.

THE MARÉCHALE

Just as we possess everything, and nothing possesses us.

THE PRINCE

My beautiful indifferent one, you would not deny me that . . . ?

THE MARÉCHALE

You are dear to me, Monseigneur, dear as the day departing.

## PALM SUNDAY

### THE PRINCE

My lovely night, take my hand.  
(*He gives her his hand preparatory to withdrawing. The axes of the woodmen sound from the forest.*)

### THE COUNTESS

Ah, the sadness of those axe-strokes.

### THE PRINCE

(*Passing close to Popelin who bows*)  
Master Popelin, I shall expect you in the château immediately so that we may sign the deed that you have drawn up.

### THE MARÉCHALE

(*In a low tone to the Chevalier who is walking beside her and who stoops to kiss her hand.*)  
That means you, my little one. The game is won.  
(*Passing close to the harpsichord she runs her hands lightly over the keys, and runs off the first tuneful measure of a quadrille which will become later the Carillon of Becourt, the future Ça ira.*)

### THE PRINCE

What are you playing, Madame?

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### THE MARÉCHALE

The new quadrille. It is my favorite tune.  
*(She starts off toward the pavilion with the Prince. The Countess and the little Viscount follow them.)*

### GAUDÉ

*(To the Count)*

Did you hear that, Monseigneur?

### THE COUNT

I heard it. I am disinherited.  
*(He follows with Gaudé in the suite of the Prince. Then Popelin and the others, leaving only Regnault and Huchette.)*

## SCENE XIV

Regnault; Huchette

*(The little gathering has dispersed. Dusk is falling, a troubled twilight, red sky with black clouds pressed on by gusts of wind across the heavens, now dark, now luminous with the afterglow. The final axe-strokes of the belated woodmen sound faintly.)*

*Regnault to the right is watching Huchette, who, after an interchange of signals with the Chevalier, follows with her eyes in the direction in which he has departed. At last she decides to go through the gardens when Regnault, walking across the stage, stops her.)*

HUCHETTE

*(Turning away)*

What do you want, Regnault? Please go!  
Let me pass!

REGNAULT

Huchette, there is something I must tell you.

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HUCHETTE

*(Casting around to right and left as though for someone to appeal to.)*

No, no. I have no time, now. You must talk to me tomorrow.

REGNAULT

*(Comprehending her fear, steps away)*

Are you afraid of me, Huchette? But that is wrong of you. It is not of me that you should be afraid.

HUCHETTE

*(Who has already passed him turns at the last words.)*

Of whom are you speaking?

*(Regnault starts toward her and he returns slowly.)*

REGNAULT

Huchette, I am in no position to judge you or blame you: you owe me nothing, I am nothing to you. True, it is impossible sometimes to hide a hurt when one loves and sees . . . well . . . the things I saw a moment ago. You will excuse me. At my age it is wrong to show jealousy. But I am uneasy about you.

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HUCHETTE

*(Touched at first, then repulsed by the last words and a little wounded.)*

But why? Because I love him. I love him, Regnault, and he loves me. Please don't trouble on my account!

REGNAULT

*(With a smile of pity)*

I am not trying to threaten your love, Huchette, but to guard it.

HUCHETTE

Does anyone threaten it?

REGNAULT

I don't want to frighten you. But you are not wise. You know that you are pretty and that you are loved. You can't even resist the pleasure of stirring desire so that you can repulse it. I haven't the courage to reproach you for that. When one has a power, one is always likely to abuse it; whether man or woman, it makes no difference. But everyone does not share with me, Huchette, my own feeling toward you, born

## PALM SUNDAY

of the old days. You see, it makes me partial toward you against all the others and even against myself. Be on your guard against wounded love — and against the most vindictive of all, self-love.

### HUCHETTE

You are right, and I thank you. It is quite true. I have abused what you call my power. I play with hearts; I am playing with yours, even now. You will forgive me. There is even a sort of joy in turning the heads of foolish gallants. And you know my own head is quite turned round with love. Happiness makes one prodigal. One feels sure of it, one feels sheltered — and the rest doesn't count for very much. . . . But I am not really bad, Regnault. You know that. One simply doesn't feel the thorn until it is under the skin; and the evil that one does passes as light-hearted mischievousness. And then sometimes, when one's own torture has ceased, it is amusing to torment others a little. I am a coquette. Regnault, I know I have done wrong. . . . And I am afraid that Fate may have stored it up against me.

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REGNAULT

Would that your happiness, good or bad, might continue forever, because it is yours. I have no cause to love the man who gave it to you. But guard him. He is in danger.

HUCHETTE

He fears nothing. Everything is his. He is loved.

REGNAULT

He is loved too much. He has taken the share of others.

HUCHETTE

I would that he could have all! For him, nothing could be enough.

REGNAULT

He is not wise! Be wise for him. Watch out. My advice is disinterested.

HUCHETTE

Where could he be better guarded than at Courtenay, which is his — (You know, Regnault, he told me that tomorrow the Prince will give it to him) — in the midst of those who love him, who are his subjects.



## PALM SUNDAY

What could he have to fear? He is guarded  
on all sides.

REGNAULT

I distrust those guards.

HUCHETTE

You bring with you from Paris troubles  
and anxieties which have no place in the  
atmosphere here. Down there, they say, it  
is like a seething cauldron. People are mad  
there. But here ideas and people have  
plenty of time; the dial measures off the  
hours one by one, and change is the most  
unwelcome thing of all.

REGNAULT

Strife began with the sons of Adam.

HUCHETTE

*(Laughing)*

Goodbye, then my Lenten sermon! To-  
morrow the feasting begins. My lord comes  
to visit me. In my room I shall build him  
an altar, and lay a cloth across it, woven of  
lilac buds and the leaves of the almond tree.

## SCENE XV

REGNAULT

*(Alone)*

Poor little victim of her folly! She had to defy me as well as her own happiness. She paid no attention to what I told her. Should I have gone further? No, I said quite enough. It is up to her to take my warning or not! It is her affair. . . . And why should I make her worry about a danger that may, after all, be only imaginary?

*(Guérin enters in his gamekeeper's dress, his rifle slung from his shoulder.)*

SCENE XVI

Regnault; Guérin

*(Twilight. A gleam of orange and red shows  
in the sky above the forest.)*

GUÉRIN

*(Laying his hand on Regnault's shoulder)*  
Still here?

REGNAULT

*(Starting)*

Guérin!

GUÉRIN

Have you seen the Chevalier?

REGNAULT

What do you want with him?

GUÉRIN

Nothing.

REGNAULT

Guérin, what are you up to? Look at me.

GUÉRIN

*(In a cold, cruel voice)*

What do I want with him? Nothing. I  
told you.

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REGNAULT

What brought you here?

GUÉRIN

My duties.

REGNAULT

Why did you ask for the Chevalier?

GUÉRIN

I merely wanted to find out from you if he had left the château.

REGNAULT

No. He is still inside. You have business with him, Guérin?

GUÉRIN

I'm not looking for him. I'm waiting for him.

REGNAULT

At such a time! I would like to know what's in your mind.

GUÉRIN

What business is it of yours? I have an appointment with him.

REGNAULT

You lie!

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GUÉRIN

On my word. He told me to wait for him down there near the Acteon. You don't believe me? (*He sneers.*) Well, you'll see, soon enough. The idiot. I tell you, he'll be there.

REGNAULT

What are you going to do, you two?

GUÉRIN

I discovered a boar's track that I want to show him.

REGNAULT

Guérin.

GUÉRIN

Well?

REGNAULT

Promise me . . .

GUÉRIN

I haven't asked anything of you. You have no business to ask me anything.

REGNAULT

Am I your friend or not?

GUÉRIN

You are. That's quite reason enough. Don't worry your head about me. . . .

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You seem to be afraid of something. What is it. The boars?

REGNAULT

One boar, yes.

GUÉRIN

Are you afraid on his account or mine?

REGNAULT

For both of you.

GUÉRIN

He who lives shall see!

REGNAULT

*(Gazing at him fixedly)*

He who dies sees nothing.

GUÉRIN

*(Turning aside, obstinately)*

I don't know what you are talking about. Let it go. You mind your own business and leave mine to me!

*(He walks off, followed by Regnault, who continues to protest. Guérin drops down the stairs, left, and disappears. Regnault remains in view but at a distance.)*

## SCENE XVII

The Count; Gaudé; Regnault a little aside

GAUDÉ

It worked out just as I predicted, Monseigneur. At this very instant, the deed is being signed that transfers your rights of inheritance to the Chevalier. You should at all costs have humored the Prince, pretended to acquiesce in his political prejudices; at least have let him explain them. You could have kept your own thoughts — but to yourself. Instead of that you contradicted him to his face and irritated him.

THE COUNT

I wouldn't give in an inch to him. If he has a will, I have one of my own. Nothing could make me dissimulate.

GAUDÉ

You see the result.

THE COUNT

No matter what it costs me!

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GAUDÉ

You certainly share the same blood. Both made to command. That appears to be why you try to ruin each other.

THE COUNT

That may all be true. But you are wrong, Gaudé, if you think that it is merely my opposition to my father's ideas that has brought him to cutting me off from my rights and denying me whatever belongs to me. He has too much sense of what is befitting his family to forget it even in his quarrels, if there were not others around him conspiring to exploit it. I tell you it's a real conspiracy. The Chevalier's party together with Popelin and his little band.

GAUDÉ

But to what purpose?

THE COUNT

Why naturally they would prefer to deal with that little spendthrift, that open-handed fool, as inheritor, so that they can squander in peace anything of my fortune that I might have been able to keep out of



## PALM SUNDAY

their clutches. They have an understanding with the Maréchale. The old Hebe has come upon a maternal streak in her disposition at last. As long as she was young or could persuade herself that she was, she was careful enough to forget her offspring. But now that she and her Jupiter are getting on, she finds it policy to acquire an heir in order to prepare for her own regency. And the mother and son working together have managed to steal the heritage that the old lion, worn out but still amorous, is quite ready to part with for a few cajoleries. But they haven't got it yet!

GAUDÉ

They have it already, Monseigneur. What is done cannot be undone.

THE COUNT

Nothing is beyond repair.

GAUDÉ

Nevertheless, Monseigneur, tomorrow . . .

THE COUNT

This isn't tomorrow, sir. I know only today.

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### GAUDÉ

Today. A few hours left. And what is there to hope for?

### THE COUNT

I don't know. But as long as the battle remains to be lost, the battle remains to be won — Who is that coming?  
*(In the dusk, Regnault stumbles against the Count.)*

## SCENE XVIII

The Count; Regnault; Gaudé

REGNAULT

Pardon, Monseigneur! . . .

THE COUNT

What are you looking for, sir?

REGNAULT

Monseigneur, I should like . . . (*He pauses.*)

THE COUNT

Well?

REGNAULT

I should like to speak to the Chevalier.

THE COUNT

I doubt if you would be able to find him again this evening. He has some business, a bit more important than ours.

REGNAULT

What I want to tell him cannot wait. It's for his own interest, not mine. The moments are precious.

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THE COUNT

Save your breath, sir. Don't get overheated. Anything worth saying is worth saying coolly.

REGNAULT

Monseigneur, your irony is ill-directed against one, who despite the little joy he derives from it, feels bound to serve you. I come to put you on your guard.

THE COUNT

Who? Me, Monsieur?

REGNAULT

Your brother. It is the same.

THE COUNT

Assuredly — In that event I must say I adopted the wrong tone. And if, as you say, a danger threatens him I should appreciate your telling me about it.

REGNAULT

Monseigneur, it is impossible for me to tell you all that I stumbled on quite by chance. It may be that the danger can be averted without going into details. But

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however that may be, it is too great to neglect. The Chevalier is about to leave the château. It is dangerous for him to be abroad alone tonight. I must manage to detain him.

THE COUNT

I will do it for you. Tell me about the danger.

REGNAULT

Don't let him out of your sight. Don't let him be alone — not even under escort.

THE COUNT

You use obscure language.

REGNAULT

The warning is clear. I can say no more.

THE COUNT

Then I thank you. We shall do whatever is necessary.

REGNAULT

Am I not to see the Chevalier?

THE COUNT

It wouldn't be worth your while to bother to wait for him. I will give him the message.

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He shall be warned. In his name and mine.  
I thank you for your services — I salute  
you, sir.

*(He dismisses Regnault who walks off and  
appears to exit right — but who, as we shall  
perceive, lingers in the vicinity.)*

## SCENE XIX

The Count; Gaudé

REGNAULT

*(The Count stands motionless for a moment without speaking, Gaudé has kept his place, respectfully, a short distance away, but he has lost nothing of the dialogue.)*

THE COUNT

*(Raising his head and looking at Gaudé)*  
Gaudé.

GAUDÉ

*(Stepping up and waiting anxiously)*  
Monseigneur? . . .

THE COUNT

*(First remains silent — then, very calmly)*  
Nothing.  
*(A short silence.)*

GAUDÉ

Monseigneur, here is the Chevalier.

THE COUNT

Very well! You may go.

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GAUDÉ

Does Monseigneur desire that I await him  
on the terrace?

THE COUNT

No. You may go inside. I shall have  
no further need of you this evening.

*(Gaudé withdraws and returns reluctantly  
toward the château after saluting the Chevalier  
who comes from the pavilion.)*



## SCENE XX

The Count; the Chevalier

THE CHEVALIER

*(Enters without noticing the Count. He breathes in deep draughts of the night air. He is happy and animated — not quite sober.)*

The beautiful ashen night . . .

The moon swims behind the clouds like a fish through the reeds. The breeze caresses my skin. . . . Embrace me, O wind, with your frosty arms. I shall warm myself again at the breast of my Huchette! *(He catches sight of the Count, standing motionless and grim, who bows to him silently.)* You here, brother? But night is only made for poets and lovers.

THE COUNT

*(Coldly ironical)*

Would you like to take that away from me also?

THE CHEVALIER

*(Laughing as from a full heart)*

Brother, I am sorry for the petty annoyances I have caused you. Really, it is

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too bad for you that I was ever born. But that is not my fault. And I don't think I could ever have done without being born. Life is too marvelous an adventure! But I don't want unhappy people around me. I want to be loved. Why I even want you to love me. I love you. On my honor! I loved you when you had everything and I had nothing! Why do you hate me simply because the tables are turned? All that is mine is yours. Our name, my château, the moonlight there, the lilac perfume — I share them with you. . . . Huchette . . . Would you like her, perhaps? . . . I am not jealous. A pleasure shared is all the sweeter. I play, I lose, I win, without malice! And why should you hold any against me? You, you have lost. Let us laugh, brother, laugh! One may lose at Easter and win at Trinity. . . . (*He offers him his hand.*)

## THE COUNT

(*Ecily*)

So be it! Let us make the best of it.  
(*He takes the hand which the Chevalier offers him.*)

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THE CHEVALIER

*(Laughing)*

The best of it is in my bed.

THE COUNT

You are going back to her?

THE CHEVALIER

I am going to take a little stroll in the forest first.

THE COUNT

The hour and the place are a bit cool for a rendezvous.

THE CHEVALIER

Saint Hubert has his rights, and they come before love. I am going to look at some boar tracks that Guérin has turned up for me.— There he is waiting for me.

*(The top of Guérin's head appears to the left.*

*He has been waiting on the stairs. Seeing the Chevalier, he draws a little closer, removing his hat.)*

THE COUNT

But it is too dark to see anything.

THE CHEVALIER

Guérin has his lantern.

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### THE COUNT

Well, then, goodbye. And dream over  
the history of Adonis.

### THE CHEVALIER

*(Laughing)*

My flower is the anemone.

*(The Chevalier joins Guérin who escorts him down the stairs left, carrying the lighted lantern in his hand, To the right, half hidden by a yew tree, Regnault is seen, looking on intently. But from the position where he stands, the esplanade being in the form of a horseshoe, he can only see the center, where the Count remains. He does not see the branch to the left, where the Chevalier has met Guérin.)*

## SCENE XXI

The Count; Regnault (*hidden*)

*(The Count watches the Chevalier departing. When he commences to descend the stairs, preceded by Guérin, the Count takes a couple of steps in his direction, as though to call him back. But he checks himself — and returns to his place.)*

REGNAULT

*(Hidden — aside)*

I wonder if the Count spoke to him?

THE COUNT

*(Having returned to the center of the scene, stands motionless watching in the direction where the Chevalier has disappeared.)*

I am not his keeper. *(From the interior of the lighted pavilion is heard the music of viols and harpsichord. The Count hesitates, listens.)* Nothing will happen . . . But if? . . . if? . . . *(He stops.)* I'd better show myself inside. *(He walks across and enters the pavilion. Regnault leaves his hiding place and returns toward the center of the esplanade.)*

SCENE XXII

Regnault; then Popelin

REGNAULT

*(Anxiously)*

The Chevalier didn't go in again.  
*(Popelin comes out of the château.)*

POPELIN

*(Turning and looking behind him)*  
A fine player, he is!

REGNAULT

Who?

POPELIN

Is that you, nephew? Heavens, how that Rose has put her thorn into you. You playing the suppliant? At your age, my boy? Why you don't have to wait for things to come your way. Take what you like.

REGNAULT

I know how to get what I want, uncle. But of whom were you speaking a moment earlier?

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POPELIN

Of the Count. He knows how to take his  
Fate gracefully.

REGNAULT

What has happened to him?

POPELIN

His whole inheritance is about to pass  
over to the Chevalier.

REGNAULT

What!

POPELIN

*(Tapping his portfolio)*

I mean it. The deed has been signed.

REGNAULT

But I saw them a moment ago, together.

POPELIN

Who?

REGNAULT

The Count and the Chevalier.

POPELIN

Didn't they eat each other up?

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REGNAULT

On the contrary. They seemed quite in agreement.

POPELIN

That's a clever family, you know. They know how to pull the wool over people's eyes.

REGNAULT

What? Are they enemies?

POPELIN

To the death.

*(He starts off. Passing near the balustrade, however, from which the entire valley can be seen, he stops a moment, stares, and says:)*

But what is that lantern, moving around over there in the grand alley? It looks a good deal like the Chevalier. And the man carrying the lantern.—. . . look . . . it's Guérin.

REGNAULT

*(Profoundly disturbed, stepping to the balustrade)*

Guérin?

*(Popelin has quietly withdrawn.)*



## SCENE XXIII

Regnault alone. Then Huchette

REGNAULT

*(Alone)*

Guérin! . . . He never warned him. *(He stops a moment, as though rooted to the ground, then sits down with a gesture as though accepting the pronouncement of Fate.)* I did what I could. Further than this, it doesn't concern me.

*(The music continues to float out from the interior of the pavilion. Huchette, out of breath, rushes in from the right toward Regnault.)*

HUCHETTE

*(Trying to get her breath)*

Regnault! Is he here? *(She hears the music and looks up at the lighted windows of the pavilion.)* Ah! Thank God, there is a ball going on. He hasn't gone out.

REGNAULT

What is the matter with you?

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HUCHETTE

Regnault, the things you warned me about a little while ago frightened me. I was quite mad, I know. I was putting on a front. I pretended not to hear. But every one of your words came back to me tonight. Every step I took away from here I thought of things that in my happiness I had simply let slip by; and terror seized me. I got as far as my doorstep, and then turned and came running back. . . . Regnault, I can do no more. Tell me that what you said a little while ago was not true, that you wanted to frighten me . . . Tell me, tell me, above anything else, Regnault, that he hasn't gone out.

REGNAULT

He has.

HUCHETTE

*(Faltering)*

Ah! . . . But where . . . which way . . . by what road? Tell me, show me, help me, Regnault! You saw him.

REGNAULT

I saw him.

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HUCHETTE

When?

REGNAULT

Just a moment ago, in the avenue that skirts the ponds; on the border of the forest yonder.

HUCHETTE

Alone?

REGNAULT

No.

HUCHETTE

Who was with him?

REGNAULT

Guérin.

HUCHETTE

*(Crying out)*

Guérin!

*(At her cry, a French window above them in the pavilion, opens. The Count comes out on the terrace and looks around him.)*

REGNAULT

Of what are you afraid?

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HUCHETTE

You know. You told me a moment ago.  
And your eyes tell me now. You are afraid  
yourself.

REGNAULT

Yes.

*(From the interior of the pavilion the notes of  
the harpsichord are heard in the Carillon  
of the Maréchale — the future Ça Ira.)*

HUCHETTE

We must run to him. *(She covers her ears.)*  
Oh! That music . . . Stop it!

THE COUNT

*(Aside)*

The Maréchale's favorite tune . . . It  
is she, playing . . .

HUCHETTE

Regnault, if you will save him, I shall love  
you, I shall be yours, your servant. Oh,  
God, I give him up! I have sinned, sinned.  
. . . But save him! Let him live!

*(Huchette pulls Regnault a short distance  
toward the stairs left. But as they begin the  
descent, a gun-shot is heard from the forest.)*

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*Huchette with a cry, faints in Regnault's arms.)*

### THE COUNT

*(Bending down at the edge of the balcony above to look out into the night. Regnault and Huchette stand in the shadows to the left, invisible to him.)*

The tree has fallen!

### REGNAULT

*(Holding the fainting Huchette in his arms, raises his head proudly toward the Count and cries:)*

Your tree! Woodman! The tree of your house. . . . It has fallen!

*(From above the Count gazes at Regnault during a moment of threatening silence. The two men, standing motionless, challenge each other with their eyes. The harpsichord strikes up the Ça Ira.)*

### THE END



## NOTES TO THE PREFACE

(1) *The Confessions*, Book XI, 1761:

“ . . . . I received a letter from a counsellor of the Parliament of Paris, who, dissatisfied with the way things were going, and distrusting the future, asked my advice about the choice of an asylum in Geneva or somewhere in Switzerland, where he could retire with his family. . . . The letter did not surprise me at all, since I believed with him and many others that the threatening state of affairs in France was making toward disaster. The reverses of an unfortunate war, all due to governmental mismanagement; the incredible disorder of the finances, the perpetual drawing on the treasury by the administration, then divided between two or three ministers, at open war with each other, and who, in order to stalemate each other, allowed the kingdom to go to ruin: the widespread discontent among people of every rank; the obstinacy of a woman, who, continually sacrificing good judgment, if, indeed she had any, to her caprices, dismissed

## NOTES TO THE PREFACE

from the public service persons with good administrative abilities to replace them by those who flattered her; everything worked together to justify the foresight of the counsellor, that of the public and my own. That foreboding gave me more than one moment of reflection as to whether I should not be wise myself in seeking a refuge outside the kingdom before it was ruined by the dissensions which threatened; but relieved by the consideration of my insignificance and the natural peaceableness of my disposition, I thought that no public disturbances could possibly reach me in the solitude in which I proposed to live. I was only sorry that, in the face of such a state of affairs, Monsieur Luxembourg should accept commissions which injured him in the esteem of the people of the place of which he was governor. I could have wished he had prepared some kind of a retreat for himself in case, as was much to be feared, the whole great machine were to fall to pieces.<sup>1</sup> . . . .”

<sup>1</sup> As early as Book IX of the *Confessions*, describing the two conflicting parties of the dispute precipitated by *The Encyclopedia*: Christians and Philosophers, as “mad wolves,” Jean-Jacques went on to say:

“The only thing lacking on the one side or the other is



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(2) Rousseau, Judge of Jean-Jacques:

These dialogues, begun in 1772, finished in 1776, are contemporary with the action of *Palm Sunday*. I shall bring up, here, two fragments.

A. — In the first, Rousseau depicts the generation of the Count and Mathieu Regnault. He shows it suffering through a bitter spirit of intolerance such as the generation before had never known. (That of the Prince and the Maréchale.) He attributes this in part to its masters. . . . "Grand imitators of the art of the Jesuits, they were their most bitter enemies, without doubt through professional jealousy. And now, swaying spirits with the same despotism, with the same dexterity, with which the others governed consciences, more subtle than their predecessors in hiding what they were really doing, and substituting, little by little, philosophical for religious intolerance, they became, without anyone suspecting it, quite as dangerous." Rousseau believed

chiefs of some influence, capable of intrigue, to throw the whole quarrel into a state of Civil War, and God knows what would follow a religious civil war, where both sides, at bottom, were equally cruel."

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himself the butt of their animosity and imagined that they were continually trying to insult him. He continues. . . .

"All this might be more difficult to accomplish in another period; but the present is in every particular, a period marked by spite and malevolence.<sup>1</sup> That cruel and vicious spirit is felt in all circles, in all the affairs of State. The vainglorious tyranny of modern philosophy has raised conceit and egotism to the highest pitch. The natural bent of the young generation toward taking the easiest point of view, has led them to adopt it with zeal, and preach it with vehemence. They bring to society the same masterful tone with which they proclaim the oracles of their sect, and *treat with an all too apparent contempt, which is really nothing but a more insolent form of hatred*, all who dare

<sup>1</sup> "Fréron was about to die (March 10, 1776). They asked who should make his epitaph: 'The first who spits on his tomb,' answered M . . . (Marmontel?). When no one mentioned me as author of that expression, I suspected that it came from the lips of a philosopher of this same period." (Note of Rousseau.) The note is by Rousseau, but the phrase sounds quite modern. One perceives that the "gentle art of living" that characterized the old Regime, according to its survivors, had certain points in common with our own. (R. R.)

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hesitate in submitting to their judgments. This lust for tyranny cannot fail to stir all the easily aroused appetites of self-love. The same spleen that runs off the pens of the masters, floods the hearts of the disciples. *Becoming slaves in order to be tyrants*, they have finished by laying down, in their own name, the laws which others have dictated to them, and in viewing all dissent as the most culpable rebellion. A generation of despots could not be very gentle nor very peaceable; and a doctrine so vainglorious, which admits neither vice nor virtue in the human heart, is hardly capable of limiting the pride of its votaries to an indulgent morality toward others and a strict code for one's self. Out of this arises those vindictive tendencies which distinguish this generation. There is, at present, neither moderation in their spirit, nor fidelity in their affections. Everyone hates all that is not his even more than he loves his own. Everyone minds his neighbor's affairs and lets his own go. There is nothing known but hate, and people cling to their own parties not because of attachment, still less out of respect, but merely because they despise their opponents. . . ."

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B. — The other fragment explains and foreshadows the “grand intellectual conspiracy,” that prepared the Revolution:

“ . . . . Among the peculiarities that distinguish the period in which we live from all others, is the curiously consistent spirit that for twenty years has directed public opinion. Up to now, such opinion varied without rhyme or reason, as the passions willed. . . . But it is no longer so today. Prejudice itself has its grades and rules; and these rules, by which the public is enslaved without suspecting it, are established solely by the views of those who direct it. Since the philosophic sect is united in one body under its chiefs, these chiefs, through the art of intrigue to which they have applied themselves, having become arbiters of public opinion, have become the real rulers of individual opinion, and consequently, of the whole state. They dream of associating themselves with men in power in order to sway with them the destinies of the nation; — those especially, who, inclined like them to secret intrigues and underground plots, can hardly fail from time to time to run across their own. . . . They yield to the principal leaders, who for

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their part, directing secretly all the power of the nation into channels predetermined among themselves, can guarantee the execution of their projects. These chiefs of the philosophic sect in reality despise them, and are in their turn despised; but common interest holds them together, because bitter hatred is with all the fundamental passion, and because, as quite naturally follows, that hatred has found a common object. And so it is that the period in which we live has become the age of hate and dark intrigues. . . .

**END**











